

# The Christian Quarterly

A THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL

VOL. 1

APRIL, 1955

NO. 3

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# THE CHRISTIAN QUARTERLY

A Theological Journal representing the viewpoint of those holding the Restoration Ideal and looking forward to the unity of God's people through the proper application of this ideal; the ultimate goal being the Evangelization of the World.

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4101 McKinney Ave., Dallas 4, Texas

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# EDITORIALS

## DENOMINATIONALISM

In this issue we present a symposium on Denominationalism. As a people we have always been opposed not only to the form of denominationalism but to its spirit. The three men conducting this symposium for our readers are able men and their insight into the problem of Denominationalism, its cause, cure and relation to the Restoration Movement, will be appreciated by all. Perhaps these three articles will help clarify our thinking and help us approach the Denominational complex (even when found within our own Movement!) in a sane, rational way.

## OPEN MEMBERSHIP AND WILL ROBISON

Dr. William Robinson, Professor of Christian Doctrine in the School of Religion, Butler University, is the author of the article, "Submarine Membership." This essay deals with the validity of "Open Membership." We hoped that the appearance of this essay will not be construed as if we were opening the pages of the *Quarterly* to a lengthy pro-and-con-discussion on Open Membership. It is the conviction of the editors of this *Quarterly* that Open Membership is, as Z. T. Sweeney once stated, "high treason" against the authority of the Almighty God. We are presenting Dr. Robinson's essay because of its novelty of argument and because Dr. Robinson reflects and represents British Restoration thought which has not been infected by the the latitudinarianism of American liberalism. We hope that Professor Robinson will contribute again to our pages.

## EDWIN ERRETT AND UNITY REPRINT

In the concluding part of "Duos of the Restoration Movement" we have selected Isaac Errett and Edwin Errett as the two outstanding editors of the Restoration Movement. All, we assume, will agree to the wisdom of the selection of Isaac Errett, but, perhaps, there are many who do not

believe that Edwin ranks in the same class as his great uncle. It is our personal conviction, however, that Edwin Errett was one of the clearest thinkers of any of the editors of the numerous journals of the Restoration Movement. He lived during a critical era, yet was able to keep on an even keel without surrendering to either extreme—the right or the left. As a good example of this clearheadedness and editorial insight we are reprinting an editorial that appeared in the *Christian Standard* of which he was editor for fifteen years. The editorial discusses the question of unity, union movements and our relation to such. Here is sober thought that all could heed.

## IN COMING ISSUES

In succeeding issues we are planning some great articles and essays. We hope to conduct another Symposium in the July issue on Biblical Hermeneutics. This will feature three or four of the top-flight teachers of this subject among our Bible College. In the fall we are planning a survey number which will include articles on New Testament, Old Testament, Christian Education, Current Theology, Archaeology, Philosophy and Apologetics. Each essay will be written by authorities in these various fields. We believe that this number will be one of the most satisfactory and rewarding that we will ever publish. We also believe that it will continue to be useful in the succeeding months and years. Of course, there will be other articles of interest contributed by our staff and we know that these will certainly be worth your perusal and study.



# SYMPOSIUM ON DENOMINATIONALISM

## Sources of Denominationalism

by Edwin V. Hayden

An old story tells about a housewife who was drawing water in the kitchen sink to wash dishes when the telephone rang. Several minutes later she heard water splashing on the kitchen floor, whereupon she dropped the telephone receiver and rushed to the kitchen to begin a frantic job of mopping up. Her friend of the telephone conversation, fearing some tragedy, sped to her house to learn what was wrong. She found the poor woman mopping at top speed but hardly keeping up with the water that was still spilling over the edge of the sink. She stepped at once to the faucet and turned off the water.

"Why didn't you do that before?" she asked the nearly-exhausted mopper.

"I couldn't. I was too busy mopping up what was on the floor," was her amazing reply.

In our efforts to mop up denominationalism, with all its attendant evils, our first consideration ought to be given to cutting off the trouble at its source. If that can be done, the mopping up process will largely take care of itself. It is the "faucet" that is giving us trouble. The forces that established denominationalism in the first place are continuing to draw Christians into denominational attitudes and organizations, and multitudes of church members are being made in organizations where undenominational Christianity is not known.

If we are to do anything about cutting off the flow at its source, we shall need to know what and where that source is. We may well begin with definitions.

The noun "denominationalism" may be traced back through the adjective "denominational", the noun "denomination", and verb "denominate" to the Latin noun, "nomen", or "name". To denominate is "to designate, or give a name to." The word "denomination" is defined as (1) the act of designating or naming; (2) a name or appellation; and finally (3) a class or division separately designated; and (4) a religious sect.

In the denominationalizing process three steps may be distinguished. The first is particularizing, or identifying within a larger body one or more smaller groups as being distinct from the rest. The second is naming, or attaching a title to the distinct party. The third is dividing, or setting apart the distinct group. This last gives rise to the word, "sect," which designates a "section" or "segment" separated from other parts of the parent body. The order of the latter two steps may be reversed; the separation may take place before the naming is done.

The prevalence of this process in the modern world, not only in the realm of religion but even in the meat market, may be seen in the sale of denominationalized chicken! Instead of buying just plain chicken, the customer is offered breast of chicken, leg of chicken, wings of chicken, and so on. The butcher has specialized, dissected, distributed, packaged and labelled the assembled separate parts of once-unified bodies. He offers uniform pieces of meat, but you can't call it chicken without adding an explanation.

### INTOLERANCE OF GOD-GIVEN INDIVIDUALITY

It is difficult, if not impossible, to assign any one reason for any single instance of denominationalism. Each is the result of a complex of influences. But in most of them there is a basic intolerance of personal variations. Men have found it hard to deal patiently with the differences which God has put into the various member of every living body. God's plan is described at length in the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians, wherein are these key verses in a fuller presentation:

"As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ....If the whole body were an eye, where the hearing? If the

whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased him....And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you" (Corinthians 12:12, 17, 18, 21).

In spite of this teaching from nature and the Word, men have still insisted on specializing and segregating. The foot has said, "Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body," and occasionally the ear has said to the eye, "because you are not also an ear, you are not of the body."

A favorite text with the uniformists is Isaiah 52:11 as quoted in Second Corinthians 6:17: "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord." In Isaiah the passage speaks of Israel's departure from among the heathen. In Second Corinthians it speaks of the Christian's break with the heathen practices of his day. The passage has been applied and misapplied to almost every difference of opinion and personality in order to accomplish separation from whom some one considers to be less perfect than himself.

The uniformists have operated in the intellectual, emotional, and volitional realms of religion. In the intellectual field, creeds have been a favorite method of enforcing uniformity of the select, and division from all others. The philosophical mind has expressed itself on the moot points of theology, and has insisted that none but philosophical minds agreeing with itself belong in the body. The Bible declares, not theories to be argued, but facts to be believed. On them there can be oneness of faith and liberty of opinion.

Intolerance of various emotional expressions of worship has made its divisions more recently. One person finds emotional expression on esthetic levels, and thus insists on stained glass windows, robed choirs, incense, candles, and the stately forms of liturgy. Another finds his emotional expression in enthusiastic song, strong rhythms, and fervid preaching. Each is inclined to consider that the other has no genuine spirituality, while the truth is that each probably needs the other to give balance to his own emotional expressions.

In the volitional realm, intolerance of

variation expresses itself in forms of discipline, written or otherwise, binding men where the Lord has left them free. Unwilling that each shall give an account of and for himself before his own master (Romans 14:4), the uniformists have written into their books more commands and prohibitions than God has written into His Word. Each defends his position as a necessary inference and application of Scriptural principles. Thus one forbids the drinking of coffee as a defilement of the temple of God, and another forbids the doing of missionary work through any except "authorized channels" as a sin of schism. In truth, each is doing violence to the doctrine that there are many members and all the members have not the same office. Romans 14 and First Corinthians 8 teach the basis of liberty and love by which such denominationalism may be avoided. Thomas Campbell wisely observed that I may not hold my brother responsible for what seems to me a necessary inference from Scriptures, rather than he is able himself to see the necessity. Here, as in the other realms, a plain "thus saith the Lord" is a different matter.

## PERSONALITIES

Coupled with human intolerance of variations within the body, human personalities have been a fruitful source of names and divisions in the body of Christ. This is especially true when men ascribe to the personality an authority which competes with that of Christ, the Head of the church.

Personalities characterized what was perhaps the first step toward denominationalism in the history of the church. In Corinth, less than thirty years after the Great Pentecost, some said, "I am of Paul"; others, "I am of Apollos;" and others, "I am of Cephas;" while still others, perhaps anxious to be distinguished from their erring brothers, insisted, "I am of Christ." Paul's rebuke to the incipient denominationalism occupies the first four chapters of the First Corinthian letter. He says most forcefully that Christians are not to belong to any separate party, and certainly not to any man; that the church leaders are servants belonging to the people. The people belong to Christ.

Personalities may be a positive or a nega-



tive influence in becoming centers of religious parties. In Corinth they were positive. Men aligned themselves by attraction to other men. This has happened many times and in many places since then. Martin Luther could not dissuade his friends and followers from centering upon him and calling themselves Lutherans. The Wesley brothers became rallying centers for a great loyalty in Methodism. Even Alexander Campbell has not been entirely successful in keeping his hearers and readers from quoting his words in place of Scripture.

Personalities have sometimes worked negatively to create divisions. In its separation from Rome, the church of England did not so much follow Henry VIII as join him in a common rebellion against the intolerable arrogance of the pope. Luther's political maneuverings drove some into the camp of John Calvin, and Calvin's harshness drove others to the milder Melancthon or Zwingli. Even now, when the party spirit afflicts a single congregation or a greater body of people, the dislike of some unlovely or ambitious person is nearly always a hidden influence behind the advertised reasons for "coming out and being separate."

When Christ is great in the hearts of believers—so great that no one else can either draw or drive them from perfect fellowship with all others who love and serve Him—this prolific source of partyism will have been cut off.

### OPINIONISM

Closely associated with personalities as a source of denominationalism is the importance of human opinions as doctrines and tests of fellowship. The human yearning to be the discoverer of some great truth unknown to the rest of the world constitutes an almost irresistible temptation. Close to it is the urge to be among the first to embrace and propagate the new and esoteric doctrine. Thus the special interpretations of Scripture which have been proposed by Luther, Calvin, and their theological heirs have been speedily accepted as necessary to "true Christianity," and have become the basis of separation from all who did not accept them. Worse still, the "special revelations" which have been claimed by Joseph Smith and his Mormon,

George Fox and his Quakers, and Mrs. Eddy and her "Scientists," have torn believers from the household of the faith.

This source of denominationalism will be hard to close off, for it springs anew with every generation, and resides as a constant threat in every breast. Until God's people can be done with the itch to propose and follow "some new thing" (Acts 17:21), and can be willing to be messengers of the old truth rather than inventors of the new, this source will remain to build denominationalism anew, even if every present denominational division should be wiped out.

### POLITICS

Politics, both civil and ecclesiastical, has played its part in developing denominationalism. When Emperor Constantine borrowed Christianity to make it a state religion and a tool for protecting his empire, he made a Roman church to compete with an Eastern church. Luther's Germans rebelled as much against Italian domination in their political affairs as they did against papal interference in their spiritual affairs. In its turn, the Church of England became simply a British version of the Roman hierarchy, with its headquarters transplanted from the Tiber to the Thames. Even beloved old Thomas Campbell belonged to the "Anti-burgher" Presbyterian denomination, which term preserved a political feud in Scotland. In our own country, political schisms born in the War Between the States still lengthen the list of denominations in the U. S. census.

The situation can develop closer home. In our own ministry we have heard one "Christian" say to another, "What is that woman doing in this church? She is a Democrat. Doesn't she know that the people here are Republicans?" And who has not heard of people who have separated themselves from the local church because of what was said in pupit or classroom a few days before some general election?

Christ must be bigger than party to the Christian. He must be bigger even than country. Then perhaps one day we shall be done with church names that flaunt their allegiance to Africa, America, England, Holland, or Germany, and flout the authority of Christ.



Ecclesiastical politics, or organization-ism, has been even more prolific than civil politics as a source of denominationalism. The names worn by churches testify to their loyalty to an ecclesiastical pattern, often more than to a divine Person. "Catholicism" carries its boast of world-wide organization; "Episcopalianism" its bishopric; "Presbyterianism" its gathering of elders; "Methodism" its efficient machinery; "Congregationalism" its political autonomy; and various "Free" and "Reformed" denominations advertise their relatively recent revolutions.

Organizationalism is more significant in the present religious world than is creedalism. A hundred years ago denominational headquarters occasionally tried and excluded preachers and congregations because they had departed from the doctrines of the sect. In recent years the trials and exclusions have been based on different matters—"denominational loyalty" it is called, and it deals with such subjects as where a congregation or preacher looks to make a ministerial connection, or even more importantly, what they do with their missionary money. Terms also have changed. When P. H. Welshimer wrote his book, "Concerning the Disciples", the term "Disciple" described one who in his generation sought to follow Christ and Him alone according to the New Testament pattern. Now, according to "official" information, it means one who gives financial support to the the agencies reporting to the International Convention of Disciples of Christ.

Every time an organization is formed, it becomes a possible focus for denominational development. The originators of most organizations have not desired this to be so. But by the process of specialization, designation, and finally division, it is all too easy to become listed in the census as something like "Holiness Bodies (Evangelistic Associations)" or "Presbyterian: Associate Reformed Synod of the South".

### PRIDE OF PARTY

Totally apart from all other sources of denominationalism, an inherent pride in being "a great brotherhood"—partyism for its own sake—must be recognized. An illus-

tration will perhaps show how this tendency works.

In 1790 one Jacob Albright, a German who had been trained in the Methodist tradition, observed the need for religious teaching among his fellow countrymen in eastern Pennsylvania, but he could not interest any official body in undertaking the work. He started out on his own, preaching and establishing churches, with the hope that before long some established denomination would accept the oversight of them. The "Albright Brethren" soon became numerous, and before absorption into an existing denomination could be arranged, they decide to establish their own denominational system. As the "Evangelical church" they frankly copied their creed and discipline from Methodism but they developed into a respectable competitor to Methodism in many communities of Pennsylvania and the East.

Christians ought to remember the "Albright Brethren" whenever they get to thinking of "our people", and start to tell someone that "we" are a "great brotherhood", the "largest religious communion indigenous to American soil." Those terms indicate something of self-conscious separation, specialization, and the taking of a discriminate name. And what more is denominationalism?

### CONCLUSION

The best way to destroy denomination-ism is never to go into it. The avoidance of it is a personal and individual matter. Let every person, when he accepts Christ, refuse to accept in addition any denominational name, creed, substitution, or authority. Let him insist on being completely Christian and only Christian. Let his love of Christ be so great that he will love, respect, and grant the fullest of Christian liberty to every other one who also loves and obeys Him. Let him be so constant in his devotion that no man or group of men will sway his allegiance from the Lord who saved him. Let him avoid the insistent evils of pride, politics, and opinionism. When Christians will do all this for one generation, denominationalism will have dried up and disappeared.



# Denominationalism In the Light of New Testament Christianity

by C. H. Phillips

The major purpose of this paper is to submit a logical, objective evaluation of that phenomenon in the religious world termed, "Denominationalism." While the title might suggest that this will be accomplished by odious subjective comparisons, such a method will not prevail. Furthermore, the thesis will deal with no one denomination or particular denominationalist. It will present a survey of the fundamental principles of denominationalism in general, as prescribed by the title of the subject.

The approach to the matter will be adherence to specific authoritative, accepted definitions of both major terms in the On the basis of the unprejudiced information thus imparted, certain contrasting principles will be presented. This procedure, while permitting a measure of personal logical comment, will have time and space and any needed subjective judgment in such a discussion as "Denominationalism in the light of New Testament Christianity."

The definitions accepted for the purpose involved and to which frequent, though not unnecessary, reference will be made are to be found in "Webster's Twentieth Century Dictionary, unabridged, published by The Publishers Guild of New York." The definitions are hereinquoted verbatim. The first is of the noun, "Christianity", as follows:

1. "The religion of Christians; or the system of doctrine and precepts taught by Christ and recorded by the evangelists and apostles."
2. "Adherence to the Christian faith; conformity to the laws and precepts of the Christian religion."

For the moment but one comment is necessary. The definition circumscribes Christianity within the limits of that which was "recorded by the evangelists and apostles." This material is all in the New Testament. The qualifying term, "New Testament" in the title is therefore, as redundant as any other modifiers are unwar-

ranted. That being so, it will be dropped as needless in the balance of the discovery.

The term, "Denominationalism" is also adequately defined in the same authoritative volume. It is given as follows:

Adherence or devotion to a denomination, sect or policy; specifically, a disposition to maintain sectarian ideas in matters of religion."

## I.

With those definitions constantly in mind some conclusions will be formed regarding denominationalism in the light of Christianity. The first consideration is that of the *Fact of Christianity*. Christianity is defined as the religion of Christians. An examination of this religion "as recorded by the evangelists and apostles" reveals that it is in every sense of the word factual and philosophical. It—as is surely too well known to need laboring in this thesis—is founded on irrefutable facts; historical events that have been attested by eye witnesses, with whom God bore joint testimony by signs and wonders recognized by another writer of the New Testament record.

When Paul wished to remind the Christians in Corinth of the foundation of their new religious relationship, he recited the facts he delivered to them—"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures and was seen of—above five hundred brethren at once."<sup>1</sup> None questions the factual experience enjoyed by the Corinthians as a result of their acceptance of those truths and the obligations they impose upon humanity; it was far more than a subjective reaction to some ephemeral idea.

Not only in origin, but in practice this religion of Christians is factual; the daily expression in word and deed of an experience so radical that any but an explanation involving supernatural operation cannot adequately account for it. "You were ser-

1. N.B. Verbatim quotations from the American Standard Version of the New Testament are used by permission.



vants of unrighteousness," says Paul, "but you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine delivered to you and became servants of righteousness." To others of the same religious convictions he wrote, "You turned from idols to serve a living and true God and to wait for his son from heaven." His epistles abound with words of praise for the evidences of the power of the factual religion they enjoyed; the manifestations of those people.

And all for one grand purpose; a purpose transcending the things of time and human conception. All the admonitions delivered to the Christians of the apostolic age dealt with behavior which had for its issue a personality in the image of the Son of God. Christians were to "grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ," that they might "grow up into the fulness of the stature of Christ." And all that they might eventually be like him, for they expected to see him as he is.

Christianity is, therefore, the divinely factual experiential, practical and purposeful religion of Christians, as recorded by the evangelists and apostles. But what of the definition of Denominationism with regard to such Religious Fact? Here Denominationism is defined as "the maintenance of sectarian ideas in matters of religion." The merest linguistic tyro knows that there is an eternity of difference between that which is factual and pure ideas. The former has being, is tangible, visible and indisputable. The latter are mental images, notions, opinions, impressions and so forth. These may eventually enter into matters of facts, but, as ideas, they have no existence except in "the mind's eye" of the one thus seeing them.

The definition suggests that the basic nature of Denominationism is to be found in that which is ephemeral. That would be bad enough were it not that Denominationism is the maintenance of *sectarian* notions! These undoubtedly have a pre-existing fact to provide the necessary mental exercise required to obtain an impression; but they become sectarian notions by perverting the truth of the given fact or facts. Such perversions Paul describes as being the work of "seducing spirits." That is a most interesting description of the origin or producers of sectarian ideas in religious matters. The

sacred volume declares that the first misunderstanding between God and his creature was caused by a seducing idea into the ear of Eve. No wonder that Paul describes the utterance of all subsequent seducing spirits as "doctrines of demons."

Sectarian ideas are evil in character as well as in origin. Their entrance into the life of Corinthian church reveals the villainess of their true character. They were heresies which produced schism—splits—and made Christian fellowship impossible. Gluttony and other unseemly forms of ill behavior characterized those who maintained sectarian ideas. No wonder that Paul describes such notions as works of the flesh" and classifies them with other ideas so bestial that their overt materializations are not mentioned in polite circles.

It cannot be said that the purpose for the "maintenance of sectarian ideas" is always intentionally evil. Nevertheless, however relatively good such notions may seem, they can produce nothing evil. The Corinthians had what might appear to be harmless sectarian impressions. Some had a notion that Paul was a far greater preacher than Cephas; others were of the opinion that Apollos was greatest among them. It would seem that some had a sectarian mental image of Christ. The prime evil of these sectarian ideas was that they all produced that glorying in man so hateful to the Lord. This exaltation of the creature rather than the Creator is the inevitable result of the "maintenances of sectarian ideas in matters of religion."

## II.

So much for Denominationism in the light of Christianity as it relates to the fact of religion. The next survey will have to do with the matter of the *Faith of Christianity*. Once again the definitions alone must provide the material for consideration. Christianity could be no better described than "Adherence"—clinging to—that faith.

As with the religion of Christians, so with the faith of their religion, it is displayed or "recorded by the evangelists and apostles." It may properly be described as "the system of doctrines and precepts taught by Christ." It is to this that Paul refers when he writes that deacons who have served well gain "great boldness in the faith

which is in Christ Jesus." This is the same faith that James has in mind when he writes, "My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, of glory, with respect of persons." This is the faith that Paul conceived to be worth fighting for; he wrote to Timothy to "fight the good fight of the faith," to "war a good warfare." This is the faith that Paul preached although he had at one time vigorously opposed it, and made the fact that he had "kept the faith" the summary of his stewardship.

So indispensable is that Christian faith that Jude, when he intended to write a delightful homily to the brethren, found himself "constrained to write" and urge his readers to "contend earnestly for the faith *once for all delivered* to the saints. That statement place Christian faith—Christianity—in its legitimate category; it is absolute and final! It had been delivered in the apostolic age. It comprised all the facts, promises, precepts and admonitions made known by the Spirit-filled preachers and teachers of that initial century. There need be no difficulty in discovering what is meant by Jude. One has only to note that which the apostles said they had delivered to the saints to know the gist of the faith once for all delivered.

Thus Paul reminded the Corinthians that he had "*delivered*" to them, in order the facts concerning the death, life and resurrection of Jesus; the good news which they had believed and in which they stood. Again, he later praised the same Christians that they were holding fast the oral teachings, "even as I *delivered* them to you." With Silas and Timothy as companions, Paul revisited the churches in Asia minor and *delivered* them the decrees to keep which had been ordained by the apostles and elder that were at Jerusalem." Luke makes a most noteworthy comment concerning the operation. "So," says this historian, "the churches were strengthened in the faith.

Two other intimations of the nature of the faith once for all delivered to the saints—the Christian faith—should suffice. One is found in Paul's letter to the Corinthians. In his determination to correct the sad situation and to have the Lord's supper observed

as it should be, he says, "I received of the Lord that which I *delivered* unto you." Here is a positive affirmation of plenary inspiration; Paul relays to the Corinthians the revealed practice of Jesus for their direction. In doing so, he demonstrates the "once for all," conclusive, nature of the faith delivered to the saints. In this respect, he is in perfect agreement with Peter who sums up the entire matter by referring to the entire Christian experience as "the way of righteousness" which he then describes as "the holy commandment *delivered* unto them."

From all the foregoing their can be no question that Christian faith is confined to the system of doctrine and precepts taught by Christ and recorded by evangelists and apostles. To paraphrase a statement by one more worthy; more than this faith is too much, less is not enough for the Christian religion.

And what of Denominationalism in the light of Christianity in this matter of Christian Faith? Denominationalism is "adherence to—policy." It will be agreed that no policy is final, never can be truly adequate or absolute. One of the definition of this noun which is derived from the "art or manner of governing a nation." Other definitions are "strategem; cunning; dexterity of management; a course prompted by selfish considerations rather than by those of mercy and right." A most unfortunate axiom is that "honesty is the best policy." It is unfortunate because it suggests that such a principle as honesty can produce a course of action prompted by selfish considerations. It is also unfortunate—except for honest purposes—that Denominationalism should be described in relation to religious faith as "dexterity in management;" a rather nice description of "compromise."

Though unfortunate and perhaps quite disconcerting to some in the circumstances, the impartial voice of religious and general history justifies the lexicographer including this term, policy, in defining Denominationalism. This thesis is not concerned with explaining the factual existence of Denominationalism so much as it is with evaluating its nature. Nevertheless, it may be feely stated here that the first sectarian



faith resulted from "dexterity of management"—religious policy backed by Imperial power which made possible the drafting of the Nicene Creed—father of the innumerable "confessions of faith" which have surfeited the religious world in relation to Christianity.

More than that, the hand of the historian writes unerringly and demonstrates that policy has governed every denominational body since the first came into being some three centuries after the apostles. The record abounds with examples of "cunning," "stratagem" and courses of action utterly devoid of mercy and right. Religious policy justifies the evil axiom that "the end justified the means." Religious policy produces what every "stratagem" in all walks of life has produced—"cunning" to defeat it and produce some other "art of manner of governing."

Adherence to policy is wholeheartedly condemned in the Christian scriptures. All the ills by which the church was beset from within were the result of some "stratagem," even "cunning". It was a matter of policy that caused Peter to act in such a manner as to bring the indignation of Paul upon him; "dissimulation" is but another word for the "dexterity" which justifies a course that is not absolutely right. When Paul spoke proudly of Christianity, he declared "this thing was not done in a corner"—had not been glossed over as a matter of policy. It was policy—dexterity of some sort—that permitted the continuance of the incestuous man "in good standing" in church at Corinth. The same "cunning" on the part of someone or group made it possible for Diotrephes "to have pre-eminence" to such an extent that he would not "receive the brethern." Evil men would never have "crept in" and it would have been impossible for "false teachers" to privily bring in their sects of destruction had brethern been "earnestly contending for the faith" instead of being engaged in their "adherence to policy."

### III.

Denominationalism in the light of Christianity presents a sorry picture in the matter of Religious Faith; its "adherence to—policy" made necessary by its "maintenance

of sectarian ideas in matters of religion" presents a glaring contrast with the "system of doctrines and precepts taught by Christ and recorded by the evangelists and apostles." Is it any wonder that the basic results to be now discussed should make an even poorer showing in the light of the *Fruitage of Christianity*?

Christianity, defined as "conformity to the laws and precepts of the Christian religion," and that Christian religion further defined as "the system of doctrines and precepts taught by Christ and recorded by the evangelists and apostles," resulted in the existence of a universal religious movement conceived and sustained by the Spirit of God; it produced a people who can only be described in the words of Peter as "an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession." The world had seen no such movement before. The ages will see none like it again. It was, is and will always be the one New Creation concerning which prophets and bards wrote and sang in ages long past.

It is impossible in the space available to fully describe the fruitage of Christianity as properly defined and understood. Suffice it that its introduction by the Spirit of God consolidated "devout men" from all parts of the then Roman empire into a fraternity that was content to "continue steadfastly in the apostles' teaching, in the breaking of bread, in fellowship and prayers;" to give the fullest expression to their initial conformity to the law of the *One Lord* in whom they had found the *One Faith* that demanded of them the *One Immersion*. Having thus been added together by the Lord, they became the *One Body* in which resided the *One Spirit* enabling them to constantly praise the *One God and Father of all*. They were, as a matter of divine course, "of *One Heart and One Soul*;" selfishness was destroyed as each yielded to the wooing selflessness of the Spirit of God within him.

The immediate impact upon society in general is epitomized in the simple statement that they had favor with all the people and the Lord daily added to their number those of their neighbors that were being saved.

The heavenly ideal of unity prevailed despite the frailties of the flesh in this new

community of heaven. Wherever the same conformity to the same laws first made known in Jerusalem prevailed, ancient divisive and destructive barriers were burned away. The black skin of the Ethiopian was no bar to the fellowship of his pale skinned Grecian brother. The otherwise punctilious Jew had no qualms of conscience or feeling as he sat at the table of the Lord with a brother Samaritan. The proud Roman patrician learned to count the plebian servant who was likewise a Christian a brother. The divine ideal was realized; there was neither male nor female, bond nor free, barbarian nor Scythian, all were one NEW MAN in Christ.

The impact of this social oneness in Christ gave to the world the first real fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. Here was a race of people whose weapons against evil were not of the flesh, but of the Spirit, mighty to the pulling down of evil principalities and bringing every thought and intent into obedience in Christ—the Prince of Peace and ruler of the kings of the earth. What all the legions of the Caesars could never do was accomplished by this peace loving, peace producing race, as it gave itself to "conformity to the laws" which have made its existence possible.

And its irresistible march in the cause of righteousness would have been unimpeded were it not for the introduction of Denominationalism—"Adherence or devotion to a denomination, sect or policy; specifically, a disposition to maintain sectarian ideas in matters of religion." What all the bloody persecution by Imperial Rome could not and did not accomplish—the extermination, even dismemberment of this race of people—Denominationalism partially achieved. Denominationalism introduced all the paraphernalia and policies which produced a carnal proud and self sufficient religious movement. It made possible the rise of Paul's "Man of Sin" and the exaltation of the things of the flesh above those of spirit. Vicious disunity characterized the development and maintenance of sectarian ideas. The "dark ages" were the inevitable offspring of the Denominationalism of the fourth century.

Since that day men have consistently cried, "peace, peace, when there is no

peace"; certainly none to the wicked. And Denominationalism has contributed its share to the social, political and religious disturbances by which the world has been afflicted since the angels promised "Peace on earth to men of God's will." No pen can adequately describe the horrors of the awful sway of Denominationalism down through the centuries. It was "maintenance of sectarian ideas" that prompted and performed the incessant persecution of those who were content with "conformity to the laws and precepts of the Christian religion." It was Denominationalism which stained the snow clad Alpine valleys with the blood of the inoffensive Waldensians. It was "Adherence to sectarian policy" which produced St. Bartholomew's day with the gutters of France running with the blood of those who preferred the "precepts of Christ" to sectarian ideas. It was Denominationalism that diverted the well intentioned Reformation into channels which multiplied the offspring of "Adherence to a denomination." It was Denominationalism that rejected and proscribed the nineteenth century plea for the exclusive maintenance of "the system of doctrines and precepts taught by Christ and recorded by the evangelists and apostles." And, yet for God, Denominationalism would yet wreck that providential provision for divine unity and peace not only in matters of religion, but in all walks of life.

Despite its flowery professions, Denominationalism has nothing to offer toward the realization of the Scriptural Unity for which the Lord Jesus Christ prayed and provided. Ecumenical and Regional Conferences of Denominationalism stifle the "still small voice" of the Word by their vocal and actual "maintenance of sectarian ideas." "Union" and "federated" movements make ample provision for individual devotees to retain "devotion to a denomination."

Denominationalism offers no cure whatever for this sad, distracted, tired world's basic ill—SIN. Whatever proper relief is enjoyed today has been made possible not because of denominationalism, but *despite* it! Denominationalism has more effectively "shut the kingdom of heaven against men" than has any other destructive device of the devil!



The illustrious patriot, Cato, viewing with the alarm the many threats to the original simplicity of Roman life, cried in season and out of season to all and sundry, "Delenda est Carthago" ("Carthage must be destroyed"). The third Punic war in 143 BC gave him his heart's desire. If words and definitions have any authoritative meaning whatever; if the record of antithetical Facts, Faith and Fruitage has any evidential value whatever, then, the all too

common term, "A Christian Denomination" is sophistical and deceptive; the time-worn phrase, "Denominational Christianity" a delusive contradiction of terms—a "sectarian idea in matters of religion." Therefore, for the sake of "the simplicity which is toward Christ", Christian patriots should logically and Scripturally believe and incessantly affirm that Denominationalism (in the light of Christianity as properly defined) must be destroyed!

## Attitudes of Restoration Leaders Toward Denominationalism

by Howard Hayes

Obviously, a paper of this scope cannot deal with *all* the attitudes of *all* the leaders in *all* the segments or areas of the Restoration Movement. Our first concern, therefore, is to establish a *terminus a quo* and a *terminus ad quem* for our discussion. Here, as in all cases of definition, the closer we approach the origin the more nearly we will come to agreement upon what constitutes the essential character of the item under consideration. In the development of any movement the passing of years brings an accumulation of "new" viewpoints or interpretations of its purpose with the result that the later advocates often have little in common with the originators. For this reason we shall confine this study of attitudes to the period of beginnings—roughly, the first half century of the movement. This will cover the period from the launching of the movement to the so-called "era of controversy" (1850-1900). The former is marked by the publication of the *Declaration and Address* (1809), often called the Magna Charta of the movement, setting forth the very views which gave the movement life and direction during its initial years; the latter is signalized by the beginning of an illiberal, dogmatic, often sectarian, heresy-hunting disposition which introduced attitudes unrepresentative of the original leaders.

One fundamental difference between the 16th century Reformation and the 19th cen-

tury Restoration movements was that of attitude toward schism in the church. Both saw the need for reformation, but with different ends in view. The Protestant reformers were more immediately concerned with the destruction of particular doctrinal and practical abuses in Christendom than they were with preserving the unity of the church; but the original aim of the Restoration leaders was the unity of the church, which they believed could be achieved through a "search for the ancient order." Among the latter, New Testament doctrine was sought, not at the expense of unity, but as a means to it. In the Protestant Reformation the issue was drawn between the Catholic insistence upon unity without regard to New Testament orthodoxy, and the Protestant insistence upon doctrinal purity without regard to unity. But there was a third viewpoint which we may call Erasmic. Erasmus wanted doctrinal reform as sincerely as did Luther, but he also wanted to preserve the unity of the church. His own word was: "I would have had religion purified without destroying authority—I would rather die times over than to make a schism."<sup>1</sup> Modern historians, especially those of the Restoration viewpoint, agree that the Erasmic view was more reasonable and Scriptural than either of the others.<sup>2</sup> True reform-

<sup>1</sup>Froude, J. A. *Life and Letters of Erasmus*. N. Y.: Chas. Scribners Sons, 1912, pp. 304, 327.

<sup>2</sup>Kershner, F. D., *Pioneers of Christian Thought*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1930, p. 251.

ation takes the long view and accomplishes its work without destroying order, while an iconoclastic attitude is only pseudo-reformatory and is concerned with the immediate problem without regard to future consequences.

This dialectic which brings out of the thesis and antitheses a higher synthesis, was the basic concept of the Restoration leaders. In a very real sense they were Erasmic in their attitudes. This attitude has often been expressed in the slogan: "Neither Catholic nor Protestant—but Christian." They were Protestant in that they accepted the New Testament as the one acceptable source of authority in religion,<sup>1</sup> but Catholic in that they believed in the inviolate unity of the church. As we shall see, this basic concept determined the attitude of the Restoration Movement leaders toward denominationalism.

Much has been written concerning the causes for the Restoration Movement, and, unquestionably, there were many; but it is recognized by all that the one immediate and fundamental cause was the unhappy state of division in the Christian world. This was true at least insofar as Thomas Campbell was concerned, and, since the Campbellian view was formative among the leaders of the movement, we may accept it as a true thesis. It was the shocking Babel of discord in the life and practice of Christendom which first arrested his attention, and it was only upon a closer scrutiny of the problem that he concluded that this state of affairs was a vast apostacy from the doctrine and spirit of the New Testament, and that the cure for this woeful state was a fresh appeal to the authority of the New Testament and a return to the simple pattern contained therein.

The primary cause of the Restoration Movement, therefore, was quite different from that which moved Luther, Calvin, and Wesley in their efforts to regenerate the church. They began in an attack upon particular errors in doctrine and practice, and were willing to pursue such particulars, if necessary, to the division of the church; but the Restoration leaders be-

gan with an attack upon the causes of division in the church, and concluded that a return to New Testament doctrine was the solution of the problem.

Thomas Campbell's first attempt to do something about division in the church was in 1805 while he was still in Ireland. He had persuaded the Anti-Berger Synod of Ireland to adopt a petition for the reunion of the Berger and Anti-Berger factions of the Secedee Presbyterian Church, and the Synod had sent him to the General Assembly of the Anti-Berger which was held in Glasgow, Scotland, that year.<sup>1</sup> Even though this was a limited project, seeking only the reunion of two branches of a denomination which was itself only a section of a sect, it shows his early concern for the divided state of the church. His concern was further aroused when he came to America and found needless and foolish barriers separating his Presbyterian brethren on the frontier. Out of his conscientious effort to do something about this situation came the famous trial which resulted in his rejection of the authority of the Presbytery of Charters and the Associate Synod of North America. His determination to be no part of a divisive movement is seen in the fact that, even after this decisive act, he still considered himself to be in the Presbyterian fellowship. It is further attested by the fact that the Christian Association of Washington, formed in 1809 for the purpose of studying New Testament Christianity, refused to be called a "church." This aversion to being responsible or instrumental in the forming of a new religious body led Thomas Campbell, in 1810, to apply to the Synod of Pittsburg for the acceptance of the Christian Association of Washington into its fellowship. It was only after all doors to fellowship were closed that this group of truth seekers finally organized the Brush Run church in 1811. But after having been force into the status of a separate "church", the accolade never rested easily upon the Campbells. The idea of creating a new party was abhorrent to them, and it was doubtless this fact which made them so

<sup>1</sup>Chillingworth: "The Bible, I say, the Bible only, is the religion of the Protestants."

<sup>1</sup>Garrison & Degroot: *The Disciples of Christ*. St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1948, p. 126.



readily accept the proffered fellowship of the Baptists in 1813.

Even the union of the Campbell-Stone movements in 1832 would be considered a "compromise" by many of our present-day brethren. Certainly there were some almost insuperable differences to be ignored—or eventually overcome. It was not easy for Alexander Campbell, with his Calvinistic background, to countenance even a mild form of Arianism—of which the Stone movement was not free. However, their problems were not only theological, but also soteriological. The Campbells had come to fully embrace Christian baptism as an essential factor in the gospel formula, whereas the followers of Stone had not. In addition to these items they were not in agreement as to the character and the operation of the Holy Spirit. But despite all this, his great concern for unity enabled Campbell to accede to the judgment of John T. Johnson, and others of like views, and to enter into the merger. He had a strong confidence in the salutary influence of the great principles of the movement, and believed that closer fellowship would furnish the environment in which they could more readily achieve their goal. It is a matter worthy of some serious thought on the part of modern disciples that the early advocates of the movement could unite despite greater obstacles than those which are the occasions of division among us today. Undoubtedly the determining factor in this decision was that of character. Even though their differences were of such variety and nature as to be insurmountable in our present milieu, they had such confidence in the character, piety, and religious zeal of each other that they were willing to venture this serious step. It is manifestly true that Christian unity is as dependent upon Christian character as it is upon Scriptural orthodoxy. The tragedy of our day is that while we are constantly coming to closer agreement upon fundamentals, we are being separated by the unconverted character of those who lead us.

The same general sentiment characterized the other groups which are looked upon as a part of the Restoration heritage. The O'Kelly movement in North Carolina and Virginia did not at first seek to break from

the Methodist fold; nor did the Stone movement in Kentucky originally seek to break with Presbyterianism. For a time the former called themselves "Republican Methodists", and even after the leaders of the latter had issued the famous "Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery", thereby dissolving the association, they still considered themselves Presbyterian ministers. The same can be said for the Indiana movement led by John Wright, and for others whom we now claim as being among those who helped to bring the Restoration Movement into existence.

In keeping with this conviction the leaders of the movement designed to work within the existing religious bodies. It was not their intention to become a separate denomination. The very term "movement" was characteristic—it speaks of a leaven at work in an already existing medium rather than of a separate organization or body. As a matter of historical fact, separation was always the result of being excluded from other fellowships rather than the willing choice of the reformers.

The objective of early Restoration literature and preaching was the reaching of those who were adherents of the contemporary denominational bodies and the winning of them to a more perfect understanding of the essential character of New Testament Christianity. The *Declaration and Address* was addressed to "all that love our Lord Jesus Christ, in sincerity, throughout *all the churches*." The author speaks of the divine ordination of love and unity; and, after contrasting the disastrous effects of division, he then calls upon his "Dearly Beloved Brethren" to face up to their responsibilities in the correcting of this sad state. He then enforces the contention that Christian unity is the common cause of all Christians. He does not conceive of it as something to be attained separate and apart from the denominational leaders of the world, but by their cooperation: "it is a common cause, the cause of Christ, and our brethren of all denominations—to each of whom it equally belongs, as to us, to exert himself for this blessed purpose."<sup>1</sup> Further along he makes a "Special Appeal to the Ministry on Behalf of Union:"

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<sup>1</sup>Campbell, T. *Declaration and Address*.

Let the minister of Jesus but—put their hand to the work and encourage the people to go forward upon the firm ground of obvious truth, to unite in the bonds of an entire Christian unity; and who will venture to say that it would soon be accomplished?....

To you, therefore, it peculiarly belongs, as the professed and acknowledge leaders of the people, to go before them in good work, to remove human opinions and the inventions of men out of the way, by carefully separating this chaff from the pure wheat of primary and authentic revelation; casting out that assumed authority, that enacting and decreeing power by which those things have been imposed and established.... Thus in justice to your station and character, honored of the Lord, would we hopefully anticipate your zealous and faithful efforts to heal the breaches of Zion, that God's dear children might dwell together in unity and love.<sup>1</sup>

Such statements, which are but typical of the early viewpoint, leave little doubt but that the Restoration leaders had no other thought than to work with, and through, the existing religious channels. Not only is this conclusion properly drawn from the writings of these men, but it is enforced by their actions. Practically all the early preaching was done in denominational church buildings and among denominational people. Virtually all of Stone's preaching was among Presbyterian churches; Scott's efforts were predominately in Baptist, Methodist, and other pulpits; Alexander Campbell's constant touring—East, West, North, South and even in Europe—was an itinerary of denominational churches. The same can be said for the labors of John T. Johnson, Raccoon John Smith, Jacob Creath, and all the others. Most of them never left their religious fellowships by choice—but eventually many of them were excommunicated or excluded from those fellowships—which only illustrates the fact that they were determined that the responsibility for broken fellowship should rest upon someone other than themselves. So deliberate was this strategy that Alexander Campbell, in response to some

criticism concerning his relationship to the Baptists, said:

I do intend to continue with this people so long as they will permit me to say what I believe; to teach what I am assured of, and to censure what is amiss in their views and practices. I have no idea of adding to the catalogue of new sects. This game has been played too long. I labor to see sectarianism abolished, and all Christians of every name united upon the one foundation upon which the apostolic church was founded.<sup>1</sup>

Apparently Mr. Campbell never outgrew this sentiment, for it is reported that just prior to his death in 1866 he said to his friend and co-laborer, Charles Louis Loos,

I have always regretted that the Baptists and we had to part; it ought not to have been so. I had hoped that we and that great people could have stood together for the advocacy of apostolic Christianity. They are worthy of such a mission.<sup>2</sup>

In keeping with such convictions the Campbells and their immediate followers never were exclusionists. They honored the slogan: "Not the only Christians, but Christians only." Thomas Campbell had addressed his unprecedented document to "beloved brethren" in "all the churches." As early as 1810, when Alexander Campbell spoke to the Christian Association of Washington on the principles and designs of the Association, he affirmed his belief that the religious parties had the *substance* of Christianity but not "the form of sound words."<sup>3</sup> The early leaders seemed to feel that their responsibility was to lead these party adherents to a more perfect understanding of this "form of sound words", rather than to cast them out as unworthy of concern and fellowship. Later (1837) when Alexander Campbell had been challenged for the use of such a statement by the famous "Lunenburg Letter" he

<sup>1</sup>Campbell, A. *Christian Baptist*, Jan. 17, 1826.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted by Loos. *Reformation of the 19th Century*. St. Louis: Christian Publication Company, 1901, p. 192.

<sup>3</sup>Richardson, R. *Memoirs of A. Campbell*. Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, p. 340.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.



ment by the famous "Lunenburg Letter" he showed his unwillingness to exclude all but those who had fully conformed to the exact pattern which the Reformers had come to champion.

Toward the end of the period under consideration, Benjamin Franklin, one of the most radical leaders of the movement conceded that "There are individuals among the sects who are not sectarians or who are more than sectarians—they are Christians or persons who have believed the gospel, submitted to it, and in spite of the leaders been constituted Christians according to the Scriptures." <sup>1</sup> This willingness to be inclusive was carried even further by Alexander Campbell when he declared:

Should I find a Pedobaptist more intelligent in the Christian Scriptures, more spiritually minded and more devoted to the Lord than a Baptist, or one immersed on a profession of the ancient faith, I could not hesitate a moment in giving the preference of my heart to him that loveth most—It is the image of Christ the Christian looks for and loves; and this does not consist in being exact in a few items, but in general devotion to the whole truth in as far as known. <sup>2</sup>

Even on an issue as positive and dogmatic as baptism he raised the interesting question: "Can a person who simply, not having the inward baptism which changes perversely, mistakes the outward baptism, his state and has praise of God, though not of all men?....To which I answer, that in my opinion, it is possible." In his debate with Rice he further elaborated upon this thought when he declared:

The man who never heard the gospel cannot disobey it; and he who, through any physical impossibility is prevented from any ordinance, is no transgressor. It is only he who knows and has power to do his Master's will, that shall be punished for disobedience. None in our views, but those who are willfully ignorant or negligent of their duty....I dare not say that there is

no salvation in the Church of Rome or in that of Constantinople; though certainly Protestants do not regard them as churches builded upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone. In all the Protestant parties there are many excellent spirits that mourn over the desolation of Zion—that love the gospel and its Author most sincerely.<sup>1</sup>

All of this, as well as subsequent events, leads to the observation that while the movement was rooted in a conviction concerning the heinousness of sectarian division, the opposition was more against its spirit than against its body. They seemed to realize that to kill the body without the spirit was but a temporary or empty victory, but that to destroy the spirit of denominationalism was to eventually and permanently destroy the outward form. For this reason they could fellowship in the contemporary denominational complex so long as they were given the freedom to teach, enlighten, and criticise with a view to real reformation. This is a lesson much needed in the present situation. Too often we are loud in our condemnation of the denominational bodies (and even the individuals within them), but have no real consciousness of the existence of a sectarian spirit; in fact, that spirit may be painfully pronounced in our own ranks. These early leaders recognized that denominationalism could not be destroyed by a bodily assault upon its outward form: that the only effective attack was upon its spirit, and they believed that such an attack could most effectively be waged from within.

This apparent paradox of men who were opposed to denominationalism seeking fellowship in the denominations is easily explained. There was not, at this time, any clear-cut concept of an undenominational church and their abhorrence for starting a new group or sect forced them to choose the lesser evil. It was not until denominational prejudice drove them out into a separate existence, and they were faced with the necessity of arbitrating their dilemmas

<sup>1</sup>Reformation of the 19th Century. Christian Pub. Co., 1901, p. 192.

<sup>2</sup>Alexander Campbell. Lunenburg Letters. Millennial Harbinger, 1837, p. 411.

<sup>1</sup>Quoted by W. T. Moore, Ref. of the 19th Cen., p. 205.

by the New Testament, that they emerged as a non-denominational, un-sectarian fellowship of Christians.

However, despite the reality of this denominational forbearance, we must not lose sight of the fact that this relationship was desirable only so long as it did not impose any insurmountable restrictions upon the freedom of the reformers in their attempt to follow the New Testament. Their policy was not one of "fellowship at any price." They were willing to suffer the form if they could be free to exorcise the spirit of denominationalism. This seems to be the point at which the movement has presently lost its way. It would appear that we have lost sight of the expediency of such a course, and that we make our approach to the problem one of extremes. On the one hand, there are the advocates of an almost adulating "ecumenicity" who are willing to surrender the unique witness of the movement for the dubious honor of sitting in the denominational councils; and on the other hand, there are those who will not fellowship anyone who is not already in agreement with their convictions. Neither viewpoint is expedient—and neither comprehends the Christian obligation as clearly as did that of the Restoration leaders.

This correlate of the principle which we have been discussing is equally enforced by the speech and conduct of the Restoration leaders. While Thomas Campbell called upon the "dear brethren" of "all the churches" to join together in this "laudable enterprise" of Christian unity, he made it equally clear that such an object could be attained only by a definite commitment to the ideal of following the New Testament standard. He stated the minimum terms of union in these words:

With you all we desire to unite in the bonds of an entire, Christian unity—Christ alone being the *head*, the center, his word the *rule*, an explicit belief of, and manifest conformity to it, in all things—the *terms*. More than this, you will not require of us; and less we cannot require of you; nor, indeed, can we reasonably suppose any would desire it, for what good purpose would it serve? We dare

neither assume nor propose the trite, indefinite distinction between essentials and non-essentials, in matters of revealed truth and duty; firmly persuaded, that, whatever may be their comparative importance, simply considered, the high obligation of the Divine authority revealing, or enjoining them, renders the belief or performance of them absolutely essential to us, in so far as we know them. And to be ignorant of anything God has revealed, can neither be our duty nor our privilege. We humbly presume, then, dear brethren, you can have no relevant objection to meet us upon this ground. <sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, there was no compromise or soft-pedaling on the sinfulness of sectarian division. Thomas Campbell spoke boldly of "the heinous nature and pernicious tendency of religious controversy among Christians;" and further decried:

What awful and distressing effects have those sad divisions produced! What aversions, what reproaches, what backbiting, what evil surmisings, what angry contentions, what enmities, what excommunications, and even persecution! !! And, indeed, this must, in some measure, continue to be the case so long as those schisms exist; for, saith the apostle, where envying and strife is ...there is confusion and every evil work. <sup>2</sup>

In proposition ten of the *Declaration and Address* he denounced division as (1) Anti-Christian, (2) anti-Scriptural, and (3) anti-natural; he characterized it as "a horrid evil, fraught with many evils." These were strong words, but they expressed the abhorrence of religious division to the reverential temper of this devout man. But not only did they express a personal opinion; they expressed an inescapable truth. Thomas Campbell is not guilty of exaggeration when he speaks of disunion as "a horrid evil" and accuses it of being "productive of confusion

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<sup>1</sup>Campbell, T. *Declaration and Address*.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*



and every evil work".<sup>1</sup>

This willingness to attack the spirit of sectarianism was also shared by Alexander Campbell. He, as well as his father, believed that bigotry, corruption, and tyranny were qualities inherent in all clerical organizations. Nothing could be more scathing than his "Strictures on the Clegy," and he often reminded the clerical leaders within his own fellowship that he had many things against them. At the close of the McCalla debate he said to a group of his colleagues: "Brethren, I fear that if you knew me better you would esteem and love me less, for let me tell you that I have almost as much against you Baptists as I have against the Presbyterians."<sup>2</sup>

Yet these sentiments did not prevent him from seeing and attempting to discharge his obligations to them. Richardson correctly observes that:

His kind personal feelings for many of the Baptist preachers, and his strong desire to continue in religious connection with a people whom he greatly esteemed, had induced him to bear with many deficiencies in their system, in hopes of leading them forward to better views.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Kershner, F. D. *Christian Union Overtures*. (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1923, p. 93.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted by M. M. Davis: *How the Disciples Began and Grew*, Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, p. 87.

<sup>3</sup>Memoirs, Op. Cit., p. 321.

"In hopes of leading them forward to better views"—this was the motive behind all his interdenominational labors. As we have seen, with the same breath in which he declared his intention of staying in the Baptist fellowship, he also declared his intention to do so only "so long as they will permit me to say what I believe, teach what I am assured of, and to censure what is amiss in their view and practices."

This principle of fellowshipping on the human level in order to teach on the spiritual level was always present. They endured the form of denominationalism in order that they might have access to the matter; they did not attack the shell, but the content—the biases and prejudices and misconceptions which were responsible for the denominational bodies. It was an emphasis upon the "doctrine, fruits, and life" of the church rather than an attack upon the accepted forms of denominationalism.

In saying this we do not infer that the Restoration leaders condoned denominationalism—they merely endured it; they suffered it as a means to an end, which was the preaching and spreading of the New Testament ideal. And by such self-abnegating toleration, and such uncompromising loyalty to the "faith once for all committed unto the saints" they won many to the plea. Individuals, families, and communities of the unchurched were won to Christ, and whole congregations of denominationalists were "taught the way of the Lord more perfectly."

## Submarine Membership

By Will Robinson

Some time ago, in conversation between students in a Seminary, I heard one student say to another, jokingly and perhaps ironically, "Oh, you belong to a 'submarine' Church." He was referring to the fact that the student he spoke to belonged to a Disciple Church which admitted members only who had submitted to Baptism by immersion. He was trying to hold the student's Church up to ridicule. Strange to say, he

himself was a Minister of a Disciple Church though obviously of one which practiced "open membership." His description of the "close membership" Church was clever, but it raised questions in my mind.

The first question it raised was, 'Is something *done*, rather than *thought*, really meaningless? If so, we had better scrap the whole Christian religion, for it seems to consist of so many things *done* rather than *thought*—a man born, a man dying, a man raised from the dead, to say nothing

of much else. Had we better scrap these foundation things and accept only the Christian ideals? They are noble enough, like mercy, pity, justice, peace, faith, integrity and the like. These are noble ideals but somehow they seem, in the Bible, to be connected with *acts*. If we carry the matter further, and decide to neglect the acts out of which the ideals arose, we might soon be where Christian Science is!

The second thought which came to me was that the ironical criticism was based upon rather a shallow understanding of the relationship of body and mind. This is a question of which we know only the fringe of matters. Certainly we have bodies as well as minds and the behaviour of our bodies may not only be the results of the workings of our minds, but the opposite may be true—the acts of our bodies may influence our minds for good or ill. We dare not be too dogmatic in claiming that *acts* of our bodies have no spiritual value whatever.

Of course, the satire was aimed at the whole sacramental principle, and if this is to be scrapped we might as well become honest and all be Quakers or Salvationists at once. It does not seem to me that there is any other honest way out of our difficulty. But the same sacramental principle covers the whole Bible. In the Bible it is a principle but not a magic. It is something which includes the physical and the spiritual. There is always the correct ritual to which the promise of God is attached, and the correct response of man which always involves a moral attitude. The true sacrifices of God are always a broken heart and a contrite spirit, which God will not despise. However correct the ritual may be, it carries no blessing unless it is accompanied by these. In the New Testament itself we have an example of the despising of these things, in the Baptism of Simon Magus to whom Peter said, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in these matters." The whole ceremony of Baptism had been undergone in a wrong spirit, and that may be true of lots of other Baptisms since, however correct the ritual has been. But that is no excuse for having the wrong ritual.

Undoubtedly, we to-day are in a difficult situation because we are heirs of a

long Christian tradition in which the sacramental principle has been mistaken for what is little else than a magical principal. It is fairly easy to see that the Latin *legal* question has played a large part in this. That is why, wanting to have none of it, we can so easily discard the ritual in favour of its fruits and think that we can have its fruits without the thing itself. But the greater sin is surely to retain the ritual, while at the same time deriding it. But this is no excuse for tolerating the wrong ritual, wrong in manner of administration and in subjects. The really honest thing would be to give up the ritual altogether; but is it at all certain that we can have the fruits without the ritual. It might be argued that we have just this amongst the Quakers; but we forget that the Quakers live their lives in an environment where the ritual is at least maintained. They are by no means so isolated as people sometimes like to imagine. How much of the fruits would they possess if the whole ritual were absent in their surroundings? Even as it is, they do often shew on their fringes evidences of anthroposophy and the results of something other than *Christian* fruits.

What is it that folks who insist on "submarine membership" are contending for? First of all they are contending for a rite to which at least Jesus submitted Himself. They may be critical questions about His *commanding* it. There are none about the fact that He submitted Himself to it at the beginning of His ministry. At least it was as important as that. The fact that the early Church practised Baptism — a physical act — as the means of entrance to the visible Church is clear enough, and it would appear that they did so *because Jesus had himself submitted to it*. Only later did they create the tradition that He had *commanded* it and embodied the command in Matt. XXVIII, 19 and later in the addition to Mark in the added ending of XVI, 9-16. These may have been after-thoughts, but their giving a lead and placing Baptism as a ritual at the entrance to the Church must surely have been due to the fact that Jesus considered the matter important enough to be baptized Himself. So important was this that the whole Church, with the exception of a small minority has continued the pract-



ice it to this present day.

So important has the Church considered the matter that, early in its history (at least as early as the last quarter of the second century), it moved the ritual up to the age of *infancy*. There is the rub for the modern mind for, judged by its standards, you may say that a useless and fairly innocent piece of ritual works the miracle of making the recipient "a child of God and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven. "What is this if it is not magic? and it has greatly stiffened the modern mind to reject the ritual and prefer the fruits. The jibe about the "submarine religion" was aimed at one who had at least rejected this superstition in favour of a ritual which at least was personally received in full knowledge of what was being done: it was at least *responsible* Baptism. Further, with the impaired rite of affusion, and insisting on immersion, it at least required some inconvenience on the part of the recipient and the symbolism was more dramatically meaningful. What is even more important it was *total* immersion, though this has been little stressed by immersionist bodies. It was the whole body which was symbolically covered indicating that, not only the head, but hands and feet and other less mentionable parts were consecrated to Christ. Moreover, as Barth has indicated, in death and burial there is involved some *threat* to life. The question as to whether the fruits of the ritual shew themselves in the recipient depends a great deal on whether the Baptism was indiscriminate. Many other than infant Baptisms are indiscriminate Baptisms. It also depends on how far *legalism*, which started the damage in this sacramental business, has percolated into the so-called more respectable kind of Baptism. How far is it conceived as the *end* rather than as the beginning of the new life in Christ? Is it a case of "'Tis done, the great transaction's done?" Such a position is hopeless.

The whole question as to what we are to do with those baptized in infancy and those baptized with an impaired mode other than immersion, is faced by what the Middle Ages called "the Baptism of desire" and "the Baptism of intention." "We need to

ask ourselves seriously, granting that by the example of Jesus and the long tradition of the Church, Baptism has been placed as a ritual at the entrance of the Church, what are we to do with impaired Baptisms? Are we to allow them to be covered by "the Baptist of intention" and such things as the confirming of the Baptismal vows in the rite of Confirmation, or are we to demand re-Baptism of all entering the Church (millions!) along with which goes the nullification of most Baptisms practised by the Church in past years? How are we to adjust the whole question of Baptism? In the first place we must maintain the witness, of which we are inheritors, to responsible Baptism and to the unimpaired ritual. It must be brought again in its symbolism to *exhibit* the Gospel and to stand as responsible Baptist. This testimony has been committed to us and we are, in conscience bound, to maintain it. But does this require the re-Baptism of those whom we think have been faultily baptized? This is a hard question which we need to meditate seriously. The answer depends on how deeply we reverence the example of our Lord, the continued practice of practically the whole Church down the ages of the sacramental principle emerging from the Bible, and how deeply we reverence our own recovery of a truer sacramental principle and practice. It depends, too, on how far the false legalism of the past has eaten into our thinking and gripped us. But legalism is not the only heritage from the past. We are bitten also with a false *spiritualism* which lies behind the jibe about "submarine membership" and leaves us drifting. Can we make it clear in our practice that we are not giving way to these kind of things? The line between tolerance and intolerance is surely fine and needs to be drawn carefully if we are to escape pitfalls. At least tolerance should not become indifference or we shall be guilty of sticking to something which is not worthwhile and practically useless, for in that case the honest thing would be to give the practice up and join those who reject the sacraments altogether. If they are of no spiritual value and do nothing at all, why not? We have then carried our idealism so far that nothing that is concrete matters.

<sup>1</sup>The Teaching Of The Baptist Church Regarding Baptism (Eng. trans. E. A. Payne).

## DUOS OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT (Conclusion)

### Two Educators

Charles Gresham

#### II. Ashley S. Johnson

Ashley S. Johnson, one of the greatest of our educators, has been forgotten, to a great extent, by the Restoration Movement. Our non-instrument brethren have paid him more homage than we, as witnessed by their reprinting of his books, *The Two Covenants*, *The Life Of Trust*, *The Holy Spirit And The Human Mind*, and *The Great Controversy*. They have recognized that here is a great teacher who is comparable to the earlier pioneers. They see in his writings (and rightly so) the work of a mature bible scholar who spent more time with God in prayer than any man among us! It is because of this neglect of this great man of God that we have chosen him as one of our "Duos of the Restoration Movement."

Ashley S. Johnson was born in a log cabin in Knox County, Tennessee, June 22, 1857. His parents had formerly been baptists but had drifted away into skepticism and indifference. Sometime after his birth preachers of the Ancient Order came into the Johnson neighborhood, among whom Dr. R. L. Lawson, John Adcock, Gilmore Randolph and W. B. Smith are notable examples. His parents were persuaded to become "Christians only" but Ashley did not make his decision till some time later. He speaks of his own conversion in this way: "In October, 1877, soon after I was twenty, I attended a Baptist revival of the old mourner's bench variety. In the midst of the great excitement which prevailed, the thought came to me like a bolt from a clear sky at noonday: Here I am, trifling my time away, knowing the truth, and these people are drifting to judgment in ignorance; I will turn over a new leaf and be a preacher! My mind was made up. I went home and told my parents. I began to study the New Testament under my father's help, and when I was fully convinced as to what I ought to do, I wrote a preacher to come. I was immersed by John Adcock on the fourteenth of October, 1877."<sup>1</sup>

Immediately after his baptism, he began

preaching. Prior to his conversion many professions had appealed to him, but these were all forgotten.<sup>2</sup> On Saturday, following his baptism, he went to Thorn Grove, Tennessee and was asked to speak which was quite a surprise to him. He read the first chapter of James and preached from the twenty-first verse of that chapter. Following this he was asked to preach frequently in the regions round about his home and soon in distant places.

In the six years following his conversion, he labored in the mountains of Sevier and Cocke counties in Tennessee, preaching wherever he could gain a hearing. Some time during this period (1879-1880) he issues his first journalistic effort, *The Christian Watchman*,—a monthly journal "designed to acquaint its readers with the religious movements of the day."<sup>3</sup> This journal grew to large circulation in the Eastern part of Tennessee and western part of North Carolina, but was short-lived. He continued to preach in Tennessee following this journalistic venture. In the winter of 1883-1884 he labored in South Carolina.

One of the greatest events of his life occurred in the summer of 1884. The National School of Oratory and Elocution was holding a summer session at Grimsby Park, Ontario. Johnson, realizing the need of training in public speaking, determined to go. Here he met Emma Elizabeth Strawn who was to be his helpmate for forty years. It was one of those cases of "love at first sight", and, after a brief courtship, the two were married at Dunnville, Ontario, December 31, 1884.

Following their marriage, the couple labored for a period of time in New York State, and from thence removed to South Carolina where Johnson had previous commitments. It was following this removal to South Carolina that the inspiration was received which produced the Correspond-

<sup>1</sup>West: *Sketches of our Mountain Pioneers*, pp. 61, 62.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Brown: *Standing on the Promises*, p. 175.

<sup>3</sup>Brown: *Ibid.*, p. 185.



ence Bible College. "Immediately he began the task of preparing lessons, announced his purpose, and enlisted students. The work prospered beyond his widest dream. Ere long more than two hundred were enrolled. He and Mrs. Johnson settled at Augusta, Georgia, for about fifteen months, ministering to what was then the Second Christian Church, and conducting the correspondence work. From here they moved to Knoxville, Tennessee, giving full time to their mail students."<sup>4</sup>

The Johnsons had not been in Knoxville long till a new inspiration came to the indefatigable worker—Why not start a school for the education of evangelists? He persuaded his wife that they should live in the country and so they purchased his maternal homestead, originally owned by his great grandfather, Jacob Kimberlin, and moved to it. Here the School of Evangelists came into being with the first two students being Albert T. Fitts, a young man who was a resident of the Johnson home, and John B. Dickson, a Georgia Methodist who came to Tennessee to be taught the way of the Lord more perfectly. Dickson was immersed and remained for over a year receiving instruction from Brother Johnson. This was in the year 1890.

In the year 1892 definite plans were projected and encouragement came from various sources. Soon a building was erected and the school formally opened with about forty students. From that humble beginning has arisen Johnson Bible College as we see it today.

The college did not escape hard times as the first decade was a continuous trial. To climax this was the great calamity of December 1, 1904, in which the Main Building burned to the ground. The loss was great, as no insurance had been carried due to the pressure of other burdens. However, out of this apparent defeat came great victory, as a new building, enlarged and enhanced, was built in the place of the old Main. This event also marked a definite change in Johnson's life. Because of the marvelous answers to his prayers which were given by God relative to his financial and spiritual crisis, Johnson became a man who placed his all in the hands of God, relying upon the power of prayer. His life, following

the fire was a more intensive life of Trust"<sup>5</sup> than it had ever been.

The next twenty years of Johnson's life were spent in activity as teacher, administrator and writer. He not only kept the school going but was able, in the meantime, to compose those masterpieces by which he shall long be remembered—*The Two Covenants*, *The Holy Spirit and The Human Mind*, *The Life of Trust* and *The Resurrection and the Future Life*.

During the closing years of his labors he suffered much from an X-ray burn and spent the winter of 1924 and 1925 consulting specialists about it. However, relief was temporary and on January 3, 1925 he preached his last sermon and eleven days later (January 14, 1925) he passed from this life to receive his eternal reward. Perhaps he entered heaven as he had said he would in his farewell address to "his boys" on January 4, 1925: "When I arrive, I will say, 'I am Ashley Sidney Johnson from Kimberlin Heights—and so this is the New Jerusalem?'"<sup>6</sup>

To evaluate Ashley S. Johnson as an educator one must consider his well-rounded personality. We are not speaking of a man whose only interest was Christian Education; we are speaking of a man who had many interest—writing, journalism, evangelism, etc.—but whose interests revolved around his one consuming passion—"That the poor have the gospel preached unto them". It is because of this variety of interests that Johnson stands among the greatest of the educators of our Movement!

Again, Johnson's greatness as an educator is seen in the pattern which he unconsciously set for later ministerial education. Kershner rightly states that Johnson, by his unique influence and methods, stamped his personality upon the whole educa-

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<sup>4</sup>West: *OP. Cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>5</sup>Almost providentially, the book, *The Life of Trust*, the autobiography of George Muller, which emphasized the power of prayer in the maintenance of his orphanage, was the first book placed in the school library. Later, Johnson wrote a volume which he entitled, *THE Life of Trust*, which is a homiletical commentary on prayer. Many have testified that no one could pray like Ashley S. Johnson!

<sup>6</sup>West: *Ibid.*, p. 68.

tional program of our people."<sup>7</sup> There are some 31 Bible Colleges in the Restoration Movement today which follow the basic pattern of ministerial education set by Ashley S. Johnson, wherein emphasis is placed upon Biblical knowledge and swift equipment for service.

Perhaps the most revealing fact of Johnson's pre-eminence as an educator is the institution that he left, and the lives that he influenced and continues to influence through this institution. One of his sons in the gospel, said concerning this influ-

ence: "Denied of sons in the flesh, he lives in the institution he called into being out of nothing, and in the lives of thousands of spiritual sons who rise to call him blessed, because he had faith enough in God to give them a chance."<sup>8</sup>

Only eternity can tell of the lives touched, directly or indirectly, by Ashley S. Johnson, the Educator and Friend of the Poor Boy!

<sup>7</sup>"Comets and Constellations" in the *Christian Standard*, Jan. 9, 1943, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup>West: *Op. Cit.*, p. 67

## Two Editors

The Restoration Movement, since its inception, has been a fertile field for journalistic activities. Many great periodicals and editors have been produced. Such names as Campbell, Franklin, Scott, Lipscombe, Fanning, Goodwin, Garrison, Errett, Lard and McGarvey are found in prominent connection with the journalism of the Movement.<sup>1</sup> W. E. Garrison points out this fact, in the following statement: "Within the limits of their special interests and capacities the Disciples have always been, as was first said of the Congregationalists, 'inclined to publication.' For a people not predominantly literary in their tastes and not greatly interested in *litterae humaniores*, they have been amazingly addicted to print. As an instrument of propaganda the printed page has been as popular as the spoken world."<sup>2</sup>

It is extremely difficult to pick out just two of the many great editors of the Movement; but feel that it is possible and necessary. The two we have chosen are the two Erretts—Isaac and his grand-nephew, Edwin. The basic reason for choosing these two rather than any others is apparent after a close perusal of the lives and works of these two. They were editors! It was in the editorial field that their greatness was most recognized. Others such as Campbell, Scott, Fanning, Franklin and Lard were greatest in other fields such as Evangelism and Education. The Erretts were the peers of the editorial field.<sup>3</sup>

### I. Isaac Errett

It is quite difficult to write of Isaac

Errett in an objective way; as an "estimate which one places upon the work and ultimate influence of Isaac Errett will be colored largely by the individual's viewpoint".<sup>4</sup> Certain individuals will look upon him as the one to whom the Restoration Movement is "indebted for being saved from becoming fissiparous sect of jangling legalists."<sup>5</sup> Others would naturally consider him the "prophet of digression."<sup>6</sup> But whatever view is taken as to the importance of Errett, all agree that he is sufficiently important to be dealt with in any historical study of the Restoration Movement.

Isaac Errett was born in New York City on January 2, 1820, the son of Henry and Sophia Errett. Isaac's grandfather, William Errett, was a British army officer and his father emigrated to New York shortly after the murder of Isaac's grandfather. He became an employe of the real estate firm of R. and A. Stewart. When Isaac was five years old his father died and

<sup>1</sup>See Claude E. Spencer's book, *Periodicals of the Disciples of Christ and Related Religious Groups* (1943), in which 1,160 periodicals are listed.

<sup>2</sup>Garrison, W. E. and DeGroot, A. T.: *The Disciples of Christ; A History*, p. 532.

<sup>3</sup>Perhaps J. H. Harrison would come next in our selection of great editors. The reason for not selecting him instead of Edwin Errett is found in his weakness—he was easily swayed! This, to some extent, vitiated his editorial greatness.

<sup>4</sup>Earl West: *The Search For The Ancient Order*, Vol. II, p. 23.

<sup>5</sup>Garrison and De. Groot: *Op. Cit.*, p. 358.

<sup>6</sup>West: *Op. Cit.*, Vol. II., p. 23.



mother re-married. The family moved to Pittsburg in 1832. It was in the spring of 1833 that Isaac was baptized by Elder Robert McLaren and he became a member of the Pittsburg church which at one time was ministered to by Robert Forrester and Walter Scott.

At sixteen Isaac was bound to a printer by the name of Anderson, and he became quite proficient in composition and type-setting. When he was 21 he obtained his release from Anderson and worked for him as a journeyman and later as editor of his paper, the *Pittsburg Intelligencer*. He also taught school for two terms in township schools near Pittsburg.

Meanwhile, his spiritual life was also developing. He preached his first sermon in the Pittsburg church on April 21, 1839. On the 18th of June, 1840, he was ordained in the newly organized Smithfield Street Church, where he became regular minister. From this point until the year 1866 we find Errett moving from one congregation to another and doing constructive work in each. This journey begins at Pittsburg goes to New Lisbon, Ohio; to North Bloomfield, Ohio; to Warren, Ohio; to Meir, Michigan; and to Detroit. From 1866 his fortunes are closely tied up with the *Christian Standard* which became his life.

During this period of pastoral labors some notable incidents need to be pointed out. In October, 1841 he was married to Harriett Reeder. This was a union that was to be happily and spiritually, though not always financially, blessed. In 1852 Errett was elected Corresponding Secretary of the Ohio State Convention. In 1860 he was induced by Professor Pendleton of Bethany College to undertake the task of obtaining an increased endowment. This he was able to do in an admirable manner in the light of circumstances brought on by impending war. He also became co-editor of the *Millennial Harbinger* and his work along this line was quite successful.

In December, 1865 a meeting of interested individuals, including the Phillips brothers, Errett and James Garfield, was held in the home of Thomas W. Phillips. Out of this meeting came the Christian Publishing Association and the *Christian Standard*. Errett began his editorial work in Cleveland

and the first issue appeared on April 7, 1866. But the enthusiasm of the preceding December was not enough and the *Standard* fell into difficult times. The discouraged stockholders in the Christian Publishing Association transferred the whole thing over to Errett on the condition that he would assume all debts and obligations. This he agreed to do, moving to Alliance, Ohio, where he became president of Alliance College in addition to his editorial duties. But this move produced no more success than previously known by the *Standard*; therefore, when R. W. Carroll and Co. of Cincinnati proposed to take over the paper, retaining Errett as editor, he readily agreed. The move was made and the first issue came forth from Cincinnati in August, 1869. The *Standard* had found its permanent home!

After suffering all of these difficulties the *Christian Standard* settled down to a peaceful existence, ever gaining in popularity and leadership. Its two important rivals in the field of journalism were the *American Christian Review*, edited by Benjamin Franklin, and the *Gospel Advocate* of Nashville, Tennessee. Both of these were extremely conservative, opposing instrumental music, missionary organizations, and other such expedients. For the next eighteen years Errett kept up his outstanding work of steering the Movement down the center of the road of progress and spiritual achievement.

Errett held many responsible positions in the more mature years of his life. In 1875 he became president of the Foreign Christian Missionary Society in which he was greatly interested. The year before he had rendered editorial and personal encouragement to a group of women who organized the Christian Women's Board of Mission. In 1884 he was chosen a member of the International Sunday School Lesson Committee and served in this capacity until his death. By 1886 his health failed and he embarked upon a trip to the Holy Land, accompanied by Z. T. Sweeney, one of the future great leaders and orators of the Movement. His travel letters were interesting and full of humor, but this did not bespeak his real feelings which along with his health were not aided to any great extent by the trip.

He died on December 19, 1888 in his sixty-ninth year and his son, Russell, became the which has succeeded to control of the *Christian Standard*. Perhaps no more fitting words can be appended to this short biography Isaac Errett than the words J. M. Van Horn spoke in behalf of him at the Centennial Convention at Pittsburg. He said: "A many-sided man, he touched life at every point. He had the insight of a seer, the heart of a philanthropist, the courage of a crusader, the constructive ability of a statesman, the enthusiasm of a reformer, the zeal of a missionary, the pen of a journalist, the consecration of a martyr and the integrity of a saint."<sup>7</sup>

When we begin to evaluate Isaac Errett as an editor, we face an almost impossible task in light of the limited space that we have. However, we can evaluate him briefly from two standpoints—(1) His personal ability as editor, and (2) his contributions to the Restoration movement.

As an editor, Isaac Errett was magnificently qualified. First of all, he was a "man of courage."<sup>8</sup> It took a man of courage to attempt to do what Alexander Campbell had been doing for 35 years. Yet this is what Errett did—he became the leader of the Movement. He was opposed on the hand by extreme conservatism and on the other hand by an extreme radicalism. As J. B. Briney pointed out, "no man in the Movement understood its spirit and genius better than Isaac Errett, and in his efforts to hold it rigidly to its original purpose, he had to contend against a too severe conservatism in one direction, and a dangerous radicalism in another!"<sup>9</sup> This is seen in his attitude toward such expedients as instrumental music, criticism of our plea on the ground of intolerance and the substitution of pseudo-union for Christian unity.<sup>10</sup> He was courageous enough to stand firm on the Word maintaining that "we are responsible for the way we deal with God's truth."<sup>11</sup> Yet he always distinguished between truth and opinion. Because of this, he sounds another basic principle guiding *the Standard*: "Any attempt to compel uniformity in thinking or in practice, where the apostles have left us free, is virtual apostasy."<sup>12</sup>

Again, Errett was an ideal leader. This is seen in the masterly way that he handled these issues that he met so courageously. The great majority of the Restoration Movement looked toward him to fill the capacity of leader vacated at Campbell's death, and he did not disappoint them.

But, above everything else, Isaac Errett was a defender of the Faith. His purpose was not to lead the Movement away into apostasy and radicalism but into closer fellowship with Christ and a better interpretation of the plea and program of the earlier pioneers. No one can read his editorials and not receive this impression at the very first. Hear his words: "We will yield to the prejudices and preferences of any and all, and sacrifice all cherished habits, tastes and expediencies. But in regard to the faith and practice revealed in the New Testament, we must be sternly uncompromising. If the battle must come on this question of baptism, there we shall stand on apostolic ground, and repeat, day and night, without ceasing, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."<sup>13</sup>

In regard to definite contributions that Isaac Errett gave, as an editor, to the Restoration movement; we point out two—a journal and an attitude.

The *Christian Standard* was a definite contribution to the life of the Movement. A weekly was not necessarily a new thing, as both the *American Christian Review* and the *Gospel Advocate* were earlier weeklies. However, a weekly paper, to have such influence and continue to have such influence, was new! This Errett contributed to the cause pleading for New Testament Christianity.

The attitude, perhaps, is the greatest of Errett's contributions. It consisted of integrity and purpose. As Jefferson stated in the *Centennial Convention Reports* "Isaac Errett's contribution to our move-

<sup>7</sup>Centennial Convention Report, p. 395.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Davis: *How The Disciples Began and Grew*, p. 180ff.

<sup>9</sup>Op. Cit., p. 396.

<sup>10</sup>Briney expands this in an admirable way. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 396, 397.

<sup>11</sup>Briney: *Ibid.*, p. 398.

<sup>12</sup>Frederic A. Henry: *Ibid.*, p. 405.

<sup>13</sup>Quoted by Davis: *Op. Cit.*, p. 183.



ment was the contribution of all his mighty power and manifold labors to preserve and propagate this movement, in the purity and integrity of its original purpose and principles, as a movement towards the restoration and world-wide extension of the Christianity of Christ and his inspired apostles in all its simplicity, spirituality, unity and catholicity."<sup>14</sup>

We conclude with the following statement of M. M. Davis written with reference to Errett's life and work: "Thus for twenty-five years of the most critical history of the Restoration Movement, Mr. Errett, its recognized leader, with pen and tongue, held it to the open sea; and we are largely indebted to him for the gratifying fact that the ship did not founder upon the reefs of unscriptural practices and human dogmas."<sup>15</sup>

## II. EDWIN R. ERRETT

Edwin Reeder Errett, the son of William Russell and Jane McCallen Errett, was born on his grandfather's farm on the outskirts of Carnegie, near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He made his appearance on January 7, 1891. His elementary education was in the public schools of Carnegie, graduating from high-school in 1907. From his childhood on up he was deeply interested in the Lord's work. He was baptized in January, 1904 by C. C. Cowgill at Carnegie and was a faithful member of the home Church.

After graduating from high-school, he matriculated at Western University of Pennsylvania (now University of Pittsburg) in the fall of 1907. Here he spent part of one year, his study being interrupted by a serious illness in 1908. After recovering from his illness he entered Bethany College to prepare for the ministry. He graduated in June, 1911 as Valedictorian of his class and was ordained to the ministry. The next school year he spent in graduate study at Yale University.

In the fall of 1912 he was called by the Standard Publishing Company to serve as Office Editor for the *Christian Standard*. He accepted the call and thus began an association which was to last more than thirty years. In 1917 he became connected

with the Bible-school department of the company, becoming Commentator and Lesson-writer of Bible-school texts. In 1925 he was promoted to editor-in-chief of Bible-school literature and served in this capacity for four years. In 1929 he became editor-in-chief of the *Christian Standard* and served in this capacity until his death.

Errett was quite interested in the Churches and Church-work of Cincinnati. For twenty years he was elder in the Madisonville Church, the church where Russell Errett, his father's cousin often attended. Beginning in 1921 he served as part-time minister of the Church at Felicity, Ohio, some 35 miles from Cincinnati. This association continued until 1939 when the pressure of his work necessitated his resignation. During the last three years of his life, he spent much time in helping the young Montgomery Road Church, even borrowing money to underwrite the purchase of a building to be used as a Church home. He was also instrumental in establishing the Cincinnati Bible Institute and taught in this institution and the later Cincinnati Bible Seminary (the product of a merger of Cincinnati Bible Institute and McGarvey Bible College) in the field of Old Testament. However, he was forced to discontinue his teaching ministry, when his work as editor of the *Christian Standard* became too heavy and pressing.

As editor of the *Christian Standard* for fifteen years, he gained prominence and recognition. Honorary degree were received from Butler University (1929); Bethany College (1939); Cincinnati Bible Seminary (1930); Phillips University (1930); Minnesota Bible College (1939); and Johnson Bible College (1942). He was a member of the Continuation Committee of the World Council of Churches and a trustee of the Christian Foundation of Indianapolis. He was a delegate to the World Conference on Faith and Order both in 1935 and 1937.

Errett's death came suddenly. Early Saturday morning, January 29, 1944, he had reached the home of his mother on his

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<sup>14</sup>Op. Cit., p. 411.

<sup>15</sup>Davis: Op. Cit., p. 183.

way to work. He had just parked his car in the garage when he was stricken with a cerebral hemorrhage. "He lingered until early afternoon, when he passed to be with the Lord whom he loved and served so faithfully and for whom he 'fought a good fight.'"<sup>16</sup> Perhaps no better words could be added than those which President Bell of Johnson Bible College used to express his appreciation of such a great man: "As a preacher, we respected him; as an editor, we admired him; as a Christian gentleman, we loved him."<sup>17</sup>

In evaluating Edwin Errett as an editor there are several things that should be considered. For instance, What characteristics are essential in the make-up of an editor? Again, Is editorial superiority relative? These two questions and their answers must, of necessity, enter in our evaluation of Errett as an editor. Taking the questions in reverse order, we ask, Is editorial superiority relative? Our answer to this is positive. It would be impossible to compare Edwin Errett with an editor of another generation (such as Alexander Campbell or Isaac Errett) as the problems faced by him were quite different. Because of this, our evaluation must be made, basically, upon our answer to the former question raised, What characteristics are essential in the make-up of an editor?—and, Did Edwin Errett manifest these qualifications in his life and work?

Undoubtedly, there are many characteristics that a good editor ought to have, and, no doubt, the list of these characteristics would vary depending upon the disposition of the individual making such a list. However, we feel that all of these characteristics can be summed up in the following six traits: (1) Biblical knowledge; (2) Knowledge of the Plea; (3) Keen insight; (4) Humor; (5) Sweetness of spirit; and (6) Breadth. All of these traits we find in Edwin R. Errett.

Errett was a Bible student. He had a knowledge of the Bible which few men had. This was a result of study in preparation for writing lesson commentaries for Bible school literature. After his elevation to the editorial post of the *Christian Standard*, he wrote short, practical excerpts of the Bible school lesson which appeared in

the *Standard*. These excerpts witness not only to his knowledge of the content of the Bible but also to the practical application which he felt that the Word ought to have in the individual Christian's life. Besides these short excerpts many of his editorials were expositions of some passage of Scripture or the survey of some Biblical doctrine. Two notable examples of these are the series of editorials on "A New Look at Acts 2:42"<sup>18</sup> and a series on "The Great Commission." Let us quote a short passage from the concluding article on the exposition of Acts 2:42 which Errett wrote in the issue of March 22, 1941. He says: "We notice . . . the comprehensive nature of this simple program of the Jerusalem church. First, there are two items concerned with the co-operation of the human factors—(1) teaching and (2) fellowship. Then there are two items concerned with their relations to God—(3) the breaking of bread in memory of the Redeemer and (4) the prayers. If we understand that by fellowship is represented the practical partnership, including financial support and benevolence, we can think of no other activity that any body of believers need to follow to make them a church." This should illustrate the fact that Errett was certainly a student of the Word and thus was quite able in this respect. His editorials were always Biblically based, practical, yet charming.

It goes without speaking that an editor within the sphere of the Restoration movement ought to have a good understanding of the Plea. In this respect Edwin Errett excelled! Harold Ford, in his splendid book, *A History of the Restoration Plea*, quotes Errett as writing the following about our plea: "As a fourth distinctive contribution, we note our plea for unity upon a definitive basis. For a long time we stood practically alone in our preaching of the desirability of unity. On that point we have so far succeeded that, while the sense of the need is not by any means unanimous, it is de-

<sup>16</sup>Dorothy Errett: "In Memory of Edwin R. Errett," *Christian Standard*, Feb. 19, 1944.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>Beginning in Jan. 4, 1941 issue and running through March 22, 1941.



lightly general. The most important element in the picture now is the lack of a formula for unity. That we have, and, most happily, it is not of our own devising. We do not have to ask the Christian world to come to us. We have the glorious privilege of urging that they all study the primitive church and find unity in the essentials laid down by the Lord and his Apostles."<sup>19</sup>

In the issue of February 3, 1940, Mr. Errett wrote an editorial concerning "too much misunderstanding of the fundamental character of our plea." He pointed out that the fundamental reason for our plea is not prudential (the church ought to unite because it would make church and missionary work efficient) but authoritative. He concluded: "All this means that even if the prudential argument for our plea did not exist, even if one might seem to destroy that argument or to claim that on behalf of unity we should yield on this or that point, there still remains this other and more important argument that *the fundamental character of Christianity is revelation and that we are bound to be true to that revelation and to the authority involved, even though the heavens should fall.*"

Errett further demonstrated his knowledge of the plea of "Christians only" in the issue of April 20, 1940, in an editorial entitled, "Why We Are Not a Denomination." The editorial seemed to have been called forth by the attitude of some of his brethren to look upon themselves (and, therefore, all of the Movement) as a denomination. In the article he pointed out several facts that one ought to take into consideration, in thinking about this subject. (1) He maintained that our protest against denominational classification is not trite. Hear him: "The protest against labeling of this group a denomination is no mere quibble arising out of pride or vanity. It is an effort to preserve a precious and vital idea." (2) In recognizing denominationalism around us we must not allow this "to be taken as an acquiescence in the system" . . . (3) In maintaining our separate existence in protesting against denominationalism we ought to be very careful so that we will not be interpreted as just another sect. This is especially relevant in reference to the names we use

and wear; for, Errett wrote, "*all of these names, whether for members of the church or the church itself, we want to use in the ecumenical sense only. We want to employ them in no exclusive sense. We want to use them only as they would be used if there were no denominations.*" (Italics Errett's), (4) In conclusion Errett wrote: "Surely it is possible for men to be purely and essentially Christians without regard to denominationalism. Surely it is not too much to expect that some people can eschew denominationalism and be just what Christ and His apostles intended the church to be—to use the names, to employ the ordinances and to organize and carry on the work of the churches as if no denominations had ever existed (except, of course, for aggressive effort to lead the denominations toward unity). If that is possible, we mean to do it."

Of course there are many other articles and editorials of Mr. Errett which we might quote from to show his cognizance of and insight into our Plea; but let us conclude with a survey of one article which he wrote four years before he became editor of the *Christian Standard*. The article that we have reference to is entitled, "Split in The Brotherhood", and appeared in the issue of May 16, 1925. The problem that had brought forth this article was the fear of some conscientious brethren that new missionary work, institutions and agencies, not approved by the organizational work, would split the brotherhood. Errett met this problem frankly, pointing out that the genius of our movement made for liberty and the only way for a split to come would be to move away from our ideals into a closeknit organizational set-up such as found among the denominations. Allow me to quote his last two paragraphs which summarize his conclusions:

"Surely it cannot be any less than wisdom to go back to the conception of each organization as but a voluntary co-operation for missionary or benevolent effort, none in any sense more official than the others, and none claiming a monopoly of its field, each standing or falling as it merits the

<sup>19</sup>Harold W. Ford: *The History of The Restoration Plea*, p. 172.

approval of the brethren, and none making loyalty to it a test of the fellowship that is in Christ. The whole genius of our people demands that. The demonstration of our plea demands it. The preservation of our unity demands it.

"There is a parable in chemistry. As surely as we crystallize, we can be split. As long as we remain fluid, no one can split us." (Italics Errett's).

One of the most valuable of Edwin Errett's characteristics as an editor was his penetrating insight. He had that ability, which very few of us have, of seeing the thing as it actually is and being able to move quickly through the peripheral chaff and get at the center kernel of truth or error, as the case might be. This is seen quite effectively in his editorials on "open-membership." In one of these editorials he stated: "We are giving considerable attention to the practice of open membership. But we are not deceived into believing that open membership is the center of the disease. At least we want our readers to be protected against any assumption that this erratic practice is the whole of the disease."<sup>20</sup> After introducing the subject in the manner stated, he then pointed out that open-membership is merely a symptom arising from a complex spiritual disease which is comprised of at least three parts. These components are (1) "low regard for obedience to Jesus Christ";<sup>21</sup> (2) doubt of the reality of sin and the divine work of redemption; and (3) rejection of the plea to restore New Testament Christianity in order to unity. It is because the open-membership clique is suffering from this complex disease that the symptom is manifested.

Another example of Errett's insight is seen in a discussion between him and John Aller. Mr. Alber, in the Nebraska state paper, illustrated our Movement's relationship to the Church universal in the following way: "Draw a large circle. This includes every manifestation of Christianity within it. Within this circle draw a number of smaller circles. One of these circles represent us . . . our church, the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ."<sup>22</sup> Errett used this as an illustration of poor thinking with reference to our Movement; however, he excused Mr. Alber on the ground of zeal.

To this Mr. Alber replied in an article, "Fiddling While Rome Burns", which appeared in the February 8, 1941 issue of the *Standard*. Here he uses the same illustration, but maintains that he and Errett were in agreement on basic principles. To this Errett replied in the same issue in an article entitled, "This is More Than Fiddling". He pointed out that he and Aller differed in two fundamental points. (1) Alber accepted the denominational churches as churches of Christ and parts of the Church universal while he did not. (2) Aller considered the brotherhood of Christians only as one of these denominations while Errett maintained that the only circle around our Movement was the large one. He further stated that if Alber's position was that of the Restoration Movement, then "our conception of unity is substantially the same as that of all denominations." Since this could not be true in view of a careful study of our literature, then Alber's position must frankly be admitted to be his own and not our Movement's. Moreover, Errett stated, to be non-denominational is not Pharasaic (which Alber unwittingly implied) but Scriptural. Brother Errett concluded his review with these words: "We do not claim that the church of Christ is co-terminous with the brethren in the Restoration movement, our movement is not identical with the church of Christ. The church of Christ is evidently dispersed with many sincere Christians in the denominations. But, on the other hand, this does not mean that the church of Christ includes all of denominationalism. The Lord knows who are His, and the Lord also knows what amidst the rubbish in denominationalism is His, and will will one day disown all but His own. Meantime, it is our fond hope that His own people will take some important steps to discard at least much of it, so that His true ecumenical church may be the better revealed and be the more effective in worldwide evangelism.

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<sup>20</sup>Christian Standard, "Open-Membership Is But A Symptom," November 9, 1940.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Quoted in editorial, "We Believe in the Church not the Churches," *Christian Standard*, February 8, 1940.



Perhaps no better conclusion as to Edwin Errett's insight could be given than the following statement written by W. R. Walker at the time of Errett's death: "His understanding of men and issues was keen. His evaluation of men in places of leadership<sup>23</sup> and his analysis of brotherhood situations was fair and complete. Incisive in thought, cogent in reasoning, skilled in expression, his writings were convincing and his words persuasive."<sup>24</sup>

In the art of instilling humor into his editorial work Edwin Errett was superb. In fact, it seemed that his whole life was pervaded by good humor.<sup>25</sup> As examples of this ability of injecting humor into his editorials, we give two instances—one in the issue of March 1, 1941 and the other in the issue of October 26, 1940. In the former we find a short editorial entitled, "The Three Tailors of Tooley Street", in which Brother Errett deals with a liberal's assumptions. This liberal had written in the *Twentieth Century Quarterly*, denying the literal second Coming of Christ and interpreting passages which seemed to indicate it as referring to Christ's spiritual comings in "new impulses to service." In doing so he flagrantly used the editorial "we" without basis. Errett comments: "But what possible basis has Mr. Coe for the statements, 'A much larger group believe' and 'Most of us accept'? Not a bit of evidence. And yet these men who tear down Christian faith claim to do it upon the basis of science.

"Canning tells us that three tailors of Tooley Street, Southwark, drafted a petition to the House of Commons, beginning, 'We, the people of England'."

In the October 26, 1940 issue we find a short humorous article dealing with the Campbell Institute (one of the small hotbeds of radicalism). Previous notice had been made by Errett of the practice of the Institute to list individuals as members who had only paid a subscription fee for their official organ, *The Scroll*, desiring only to keep up with this radical organization and certainly not wishing to become members of the Institute. Errett then stated "that this must be a rather common practice. The 1940 list of members number 500. As the annual dues are declared to be \$2 (or in

the scholastic language of the Institute, 'two iron men'), the income from dues alone ought to be \$1,060, to which should be added subscriptions to the *Scroll*. But the treasurer's annual report records 'the highest income ever in dues', \$570. The discrepancy there is so great as to be embarrassing. There are 146 enrolled in the 1940 list that were not on the 1938 list. If these paid dues in enrolling, there remains only \$278 to have been paid in dues by almost 400 old members. Surely the old standby are not cooling off! Yet if those four hundred older members alone paid their \$2 each, the collection would amount to \$800. We can't figure it out. We give up." Errett then concluded in a whimsical manner: "We can have no objection to bargain rates in the Campbell Institute. But we do fear the effect of mental suggestion. If the Institute succeeds in listing as members those who have no desire to belong, may we not soon hear that Dr. Ames and his coterie are enlarging the rolls of the open-membership Disciple congregations by adding such notables as Albert Einstein, Comrade Stalin, Signor Mussolini and even Herr Hitler, without regard to will of these worthies? That would be a brand-new method of salvation and "counting noses" with a vengeance." Thus, did Errett put humor into his editorials!

Another characteristic of good editorial work is sweetness of spirit. In this respect Edwin Errett was eminently qualified. Walker said of him: "Those who disagreed with him respected him for his fairness and tempered considerations of their views."<sup>26</sup> How true we see this to be in his editorials! Note his impartial treatment of John Al-ber's article which we have already referred

<sup>23</sup>For example, his editorial, "The Way to Peace," found in the issue of July 22, 1939, where he brings 32 counts against E. K. Higdon who has been recently appointed to a responsible position in the U. C. M. S. These charges are made with conviction, but no personal condemnation of Higdon is involved, illustrating the fairness, yet firmness, with which Errett dealt with such issues.

<sup>24</sup>*Christian Standard*, February 19, 1944.

<sup>25</sup>Both P. H. Welshimer and George Rutledge pointed out this fact in writing in memory of him in *Christian Standard*, February 19, 1944.

<sup>26</sup>*Christian Standard*, February 19, 1944.

to in this article. Perhaps one of the best examples of his impartiality and sweetness of spirit is found in his editorial treatment of the appointment of E. K. Higdon as an official in the United Christian Missionary Society.<sup>27</sup> Even though Errett brought 32 factual counts against Higdon, he does it without malice, even excusing Mr. Higdon, since he believed that Higdon had never had the "beauty of our plea" revealed to him. This is not an exception but the general rule of his attitude toward those whom he opposed on grounds of principle. Perhaps no editor among us, from the beginning of our Movement, ever manifested this spirit in such a way as did Edwin Errett.

There are many other characteristics of Edwin Errett which demonstrate his superb ability as an editor, but the scope of this article is necessarily limited and we will not be able to discuss them. We conclude our evaluation with a word about Errett's breadth. By this we mean his remarkable ability to survey the whole field of Christian thought and to interpret it in terms relative to the Restoration movement. We noted, in our short biographical sketch, that he was a member of the Continuation

Committee of the World Council of Churches and was a delegate of both the 1935 and 1937 meetings of the Council on Faith and Order.<sup>28</sup> He was quite interested in the International Council of Religious Education, yet criticized it freely.<sup>29</sup> He was a warm supporter of the National Association of Evangelicals in its infancy, though not necessarily blind to its weak spots.<sup>30</sup>

With reference to the brotherhood of "Christians only", we see the greatness of Errett's breadth. He stood behind every cause that was good and worked for New Testament Christianity. His voice was a clarion call to his brethren to help the missionary causes, the preacher-training schools and promote the spirit of effective evangelism. Here was the true "ecumenical" spirit! Here was one of "God's good men."

<sup>27</sup>*Christian Standard*, July 22, 1939.

<sup>28</sup>We do not believe that Errett necessarily believed in the validity of this type of union; it seems that he used this opportunity to speak for the Movement before a world audience.

<sup>29</sup>*Christian Standard*, March 1, 1941.

<sup>30</sup>As seen by the reprint of Ockenga's keynote address (*Christian Standard*, May 22, 1943) and J. D. Murch's story, *Christian Standard*, May 29, 1943).

## How Far Can We Co-operate In Union Movements?

Union movements among Christian groups are becoming so popular that the movement for unity upon the New Testament basis may be somewhat embarrassed. Certainly this will be true unless we do some clear thinking as to what should be our attitude. It is a different situation from that which faced the founders of this movement about a century and a quarter ago. It is not proper to say, as some do, that the situation is absolutely reversed; but it is significant that the sectarianism that our fathers knew has been so greatly ameliorated that most of the denominations are not only practicing some sort of co-operation, but are indicating desire for some measure of union. At least they are for union in the

abstract.

The fundamental fact to be kept in mind is that our movement for unity is now one of many such movements. That is always an embarrassing situation. We see it in the case of the campaign against the liquor evil and the campaign against war. Men may profess sincerely the same objective, but have strong reasons for not surrendering their allegiance to some particular method of attaining it, and may, therefore, have entirely proper reasons for refusing to surrender their own organization or even refusal to co-operate in some other organization. Not all enemies of war can conscientiously join all the pacific organizations, and not all advocates of temperance



can approve all the antiliquor agencies. So it may well be in this campaign for Christian unity.

Not all of our own brethern will agree that ours is a unity movement. They protest against the idea that our objective is union, because they fear that this will be taken to signify that we will sacrifice much for unity; that we will give up our historic principles and program, at least in part, if we can thereby be assured that unity can be had. If to say that ours is a unity movement means that, certainly we are not a unity movement, much less a union movement; and these objectors are right. We have certain principles that we can not surrender, and they are divine principles. But to say that ours is a unity movement does not mean that we will take unity at any price. We are more truly a unity movement than any other in the field, for the simple reason that we have not only desire, but the divine pattern of unity—that is, the New Testament pattern of the church—at the very core of our movement. It is the only unity that can be either proper or enduring, because it is founded upon the authority of the Head of the church and upon the respect the united church must certainly demand for that authority, if it is to be worth anything. Ours is a movement for unity of the church by restoration of the New Testament church in its doctrine, ordinances and fruit. No other unity movement is so completely committed to true unity.

Now, what should be the attitude of this unity movement to all the others? Certainly we can not be indifferent to them; that would be to belie our passion. Nor can we be blindly inimical to them; that, too, would be contrary to true sentiment, as well as bad judgment. We ought certainly to weigh carefully every effort, and ordinary Christian spirit would teach a kindly attitude, unless there be evident some sinister design. We must always have in mind that the road to unity may prove long and that there may have to be many false starts and imperfect results before the lesson is properly learned. Surely any sincere effort is to be commended. Moreover, if there is real merit in the claim that we

make to present the ultimate unity, our cause can not really suffer by the demonstrations of these imperfect schemes. And underlying all else is the importance of the passion for unity. We must, if we be sincere, rejoice at every manifestation of that. Even those efforts toward unity that effect the consolidations of denominations must be welcome to us both because they involve an expression of the desire and because they must ultimately demonstrate the need for the complete thing that we believe the Lord to intend.

But are we always to stand off on the side lines, even though it be in the attitude of cheer leaders? That is the really vital question.

If we sincerely want unity, and there are good people working toward unity, it would seem that the burden of proof is upon us if we choose to stay out when we are invited to help. In other words, we must give some adequate reason for not lending our help when it is asked. And there are adequate reasons for our staying out of some of these movements.

Can we formulate a guiding principle in the matter? It would seem that, since ours is a movement for unity *upon a definite principle we should be free and glad to co-operate in any union movement that does not involve us in violation of that definite principle; that is, any union movement that does not stultify our witness to the Scriptural basis of unity.*

For instance, we could not properly co-operate in any union movement that involved us in recognizing any un-Scriptural authority, any human authority. Nor could we co-operate in any union movement that involved us in replacing with some human substitute the proclamation of the entire New Testament terms of pardon and order of the church. Nor could we properly co-operate in any union movement that meant the freezing of the present denominational order, the endorsement of the denominational system; that, too, would stultify our witness to the only true Christian unity and the complete authority of Jesus.

What ought to be remembered always is that we can, as Christians, co-operate with anybody on any matter so long as it does



not involve us in a stultification of our witness. We can co-operate with Catholics as long as they do not insist upon our recognizing some claims to peculiar authority. We can co-operate with Jews so long as they do not ask us to be silent as to the Messiahship of Jesus. We can co-operate with atheists so long as they do not ask in return that we disown our God. And, as Christians, we do so co-operate with all these to many wholesome ends.

That being the case, we certainly ought to be able to participate in any worthy union movement that does not tie our hands in the unity movement to which we owe our primary service.

Now, for the very reason that we do not want the ultimate unity to be a freezing of the present denominational concepts of the church, we could much prefer that all the measures for this co-operation should be rather a co-operation of Christian individuals than a co-operation of representatives of denominations. As indicated above, we can not properly co-operate in any movement that compels us to hold an exact denominational or sectarian status, agreeing therefore to keep our mouths shut with reference to our unique witness. But there are certain attempts to attain Christian co-operation and to approach unity that involve an effort to distribute representation upon a fair basis of membership in the several groups. So long as this involves no committal for silence on our plea and no recognition of non-Scriptural authority, the mere fact that it involves proportional representation in co-operative effort ought not to be held a reason for our abstention.

It must, of course, be assumed that we shall stay out of any organization that by its very nature or by its settled course of action

gives itself to destruction of the faith in Christ and His Book. If He is not to have the authority, there can be no place for our plea and there would be nothing but enmity to our cause created by such an organization, and ranks of the enemies of that sort of organization, and this is true no matter how sincere may be the members of it.

We fear that there are some of our brethren whose antagonism to denominationalism has gone so far that they believe themselves obligated to oppose everything, no matter how good it may be, that originates among denominational people. Indeed, they claim that its very merits may mean that its success may build up denominationalism. Carried to its logical conclusions, this attitude would mean that we ought not to hold church services on the Lord's Day morning, and we ought not to ring church bells, and we ought not to sing any hymns written and sung by denominationalists, and we ought not to have any Bible schools.

Our common practice of having union Thanksgiving services is fine example of what we can and ought to do. Whatever tends to express the common principles of our faith ought to be encouraged. In the long run, whatever benefits accrue to denominational congregations will be overcome by the general effects of the breakdown of sectarian spirit and kindlier hearing for our own plea.

We are one unity movement among many; the others seem to us quite imperfect, and therefore we are bound to do all that will advance the cause of true unity and abstain from doing all that will interfere with the realization of that ultimate unity, the witness to which seems to us to be a sacred trust that we dare not betray.

## BOOK REVIEWS

William Garrett West: *Barton Warren Stone: Early American Advocate of Christian Unity*. Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1954.

The Disciples of Christ Historical Society is to be congratulated upon the publication of this new book by Dr. West. It is the first in what we hope will be a long list of books of Restoration interest that the So-

ciety will be able to publish. Already they have enriched the life of the Restoration Movement through their work of collecting and organizing Restoration material.

The book is the outgrowth of a Doctoral Dissertation on Stone By Dr. William West which he did under the direction of Dr. Luther A. Weigle (who writes the introduction) of Yale Divinity School. It is a



very fine contribution to the understanding of Barton W. Stone who was one of the great pioneers of our Movement.

The work is especially to be praised for its lucid interpretation of Stone's early life, ministry, work at Cane Ridge during the Great Revival and other elements of his personal history. A very excellent job is done in portraying the spiritual struggle of Stone while in the throes of Calvinism. From these various standpoints a great contribution to Disciplinary is made by Dr. West.

There are several points, however, which I feel need criticism for the sake of truth.

(1) There seems to be a labored attempt to picture Alexander Campbell in a rather extreme light in order to highlight some of Stone's characteristics. Such statements as "He (Campbell) probably regarded the *Christian Messenger* as a 'poor relation' in the field (of journalism)" surely are not reflective of the real facts in the case. True, Campbell differed with Stone in many areas of opinion but are we justified in believing that Campbell was an extremist and bigoted in order to see Stone in proper perspective? In order to see Stone in proper perspective? Could it be that Campbell's insistence upon "immersion for the remission of sins" has caused West to quasi-caricature him? The Dr. West had just written facts and left the opposite up to each individual reader.

(2) In West's analysis of the differences between the Campbell and Stone groups on Baptism one sees the presentation of historical ground for the Open-membership advocacy of today. Whether the dissemination of this historical controversy will serve the Open-membership cause now remains to be seen.

(3) Dr. West is certainly correct in pointing out that Stone was a enthusiastic advocate for Christian Unity. This, apparently, is the thesis of the whole book. No criticism can be leveled at this thesis. However, there are certain implications in Dr. West's discussions of this item that do not seem to be two well-founded. For example, we quote this evaluation which Dr. West makes:

Stone was far ahead of his time; in his own day he had no congenial spiritual home for the major emphasis of his life. But he would have been very much at

home in Edinburgh, Stockholm, Lausanne, Oxford, Amsterdam, and Evanston, where the present ecumenical movement began to flower.

In the light of the *Last Will and Testament* and the various works of Stone, can one honestly and truthfully make this value judgement? It is, this reviewer's conviction that he cannot. Stone believed in unity with a passion but he would never give up cherished convictions and guilty of the liberal "unity-at-any-price" line.

In another passage West attempts to point out the harmful and baleful influence that "biblical primitivism" has had upon the "Disciples of Christ Communion." He then states:

A new attitude toward the Bible and a new understanding of the structure of New Testament churches, has enabled large numbers of the Disciples to discover spiritual foundations of unity. The remarkable thing about Stone is that he saw this long before the new biblical learning was accepted in this country. Had the Disciples of Christ or Christian churches followed his emphasis, it is highly probable that they would not have divided into three major wings and some twenty-three other groups, each stressing one or more divisive issues. It is almost equally certain that they would have been closer to the main bodies of Protestantism and more influential in the American religious scene.

This is a good example of hypothetically or "it-might-have-been" thinking. What new attitude is he referring to and what new understanding has come to our attention about the structure of New Testament Churches? How do we know what Barton W. Stone would have done if he had lived 100 years later? This is that same attempt to baptize all the Restoration pioneers into the fellowship of the liberal and radical camp by supposition and hypothetical thought. We find the same thing in W. C. Morro's biography of J. W. McGarvey. May we say that we cannot sacrifice conviction or compromise New Testament Faith as the New Testament (to which Stone points all Christians) amply testifies, no matter how much we may desire Unity. It is a fundamental thesis



of all these Pioneers (Stone included, if properly understood) that the Restoration of New Testament Christianity is a prerequisite of Christian Unity.

Perhaps, in this review, I have been overcritical, but it seems that there is a tendency among the Disciples to minimise any idea of doctrine in the thinking of these early leaders of the Restoration Movement. There is a great deal of good in this book for the discriminating reader. The style is refreshing, the format and printing excellent; if one can read well and winnow out the suppositions and inferences which are not factually based he can gain much from this work.

Charles Gresham.

Don DeWelt: *Acts Made Actual*. Rosemead, California. Old Paths Book Club, 1953.

"Acts Made Actual" is a commentary-text of the Acts of the Apostles. The author of the book is a young man currently engaged as teacher of New Testament, Sacred History, Homiletics and Personal Evangelism at San Jose Bible College, San Jose, California. He has demonstrated his proficiency in several areas, including art and authorship. These two are especially demonstrated in this book.

This volume came through Mr. DeWelt's recognition of the need of just such a textbook in his class work at the Bible College. He utilized many of the notes and charts from which he had been teaching to produce the manuscript for the book itself.

Its purpose is best stated in the words of the author himself in the preface of the book:

This book is prepared to be practical and not necessarily scholarly. The student of the Bible who for the first time begins his study of the wonderful book of Acts will find here a real help in enabling him to comprehend the general outline of the book, as well as a simple verse by verse comment on its content.

The most uniquely interesting factor concerning Mr. DeWelt's book is its utilitarian format. Each page, with its charts and pictures and running commentary, is designed to be complete within itself. While some supplemental reading is necessary,

this single volume is the repository of a great wealth of information concerning the Biblical book about which it is written. The outlines are basic and easy to follow. The charts are clear and concise. The pictures and sketches used are pertinent to the material being discussed. And first and foremost in importance, while credit is to be given for all the foregoing, the author is **COMPLETELY AND HONESTLY SCRIPTURAL** in his presentation.

Because of the accuracy of the text of the American Standard Version of the New Testament, that version is used throughout the book in line with the running commentary.

Another valuable study feature which will appeal to many Bible school teachers and leaders is the use of questions at the foot of each page. These are designed to summarize the material studied and catechistically impress it on the mind of the pupil.

In the concluding pages of the book are some special studies upon topics of interest within the book of Acts. These alone make the purchase of the book worth while. A series of seven examinations which Mr. DeWelt has given to his pupils concludes the volume. These may be used by teachers in college or institute work if so desired.

While **ACTS MADE ACTUAL** is originally designed to meet the needs of anyone studying the books of the Bible via commentaries, it meets its greatest acclaim as a college textbook. It is also pertinent to note here the honor to the author which has come through its publication. The Old Paths Book Club is an affiliate of the anti-instrumental Churches of Christ. They have been consistently rigid in their selection of materials to print. Their choice of this book is complimentary both to the author and the doctrinal emphases of his book.

James Earl Ladd II.